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**'Growth in the
knowledge of
our Lord',
meditations,
adapted by a ...**

**Charles Michel A.
de Brandt**





"Growth in the knowledge of our Lord."

“Growth in the knowledge of our Lord.”

MEDITATIONS FOR EVERY DAY OF THE YEAR,
EXCLUSIVE OF THOSE FOR EACH FESTIVAL, DAY OF RETREAT,
ETC.

Adapted from the French Original
OF THE
ABBÉ DE BRANDT,
BY A “DAUGHTER OF THE CROSS”.

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ERRATA.

- Page 85, line 14, "Simply because Jesus—" *read* "simply because
God—"
- „ 101, „ 11, "glory will be enhanced" *read* "glory will be made
manifest "
- „ 216, „ 26, "under the protection of God ;" *read* "under the
direct protection of God ;"
- „ 306, „ 6, "that Rod " *read* "that Stem "
- „ 333, „ 12, "she appeared insensible," etc., *read* "she appeared
startled, for the moment, by the glory" . . .
"must I not prefer "

P R A Y E R S.

OUR Father, Who art in Heaven ; hallowed be Thy Name ; Thy kingdom come ; Thy Will be done on earth, as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread ; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us ; and lead us not into temptation ; but deliver us from evil. Amen.

HAIL Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the Fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners ; now, and at the hour of our death. Amen.

Soul of Christ, sanctify me ;
Body of Christ, save me ;
Blood of Christ, inebriate me ;
Water from the Side of Christ, wash me ;
Passion of Christ, strengthen me ;
O Good Jesus, hear me ;
Within Thy Wounds hide me ;
Suffer me not to be separated from Thee ;
From the malignant enemy, defend me ;

In the hour of my death, call me ; and bid me come to Thee, that with Thy Angels and Saints I may praise Thee, for all eternity. Amen.

O GOD, Who didst teach the hearts of the faithful by the light of the Holy Spirit, grant that we may, by the gifts of the same Spirit, be always truly wise, and ever rejoice in His consolation. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

TAKE, O Lord, and receive my memory, my understanding, my whole will : all that I have, all that I am, I give to Thee, to be made use of, according to Thy good pleasure. Give me only Thy love and Thy grace : with these I am rich enough.

O JESUS, living in Mary, come Thou and live in my soul ;—by Thy Spirit of Holiness,—in the fulness of Thy Strength,—in the perfection of Thy Virtues,—in the power of Thy Truth,—and by communicating to me Thy mysterious Graces. Deliver me from all the enemies of my salvation ; and govern me by Thy Spirit, to the glory of Thy Father. Amen.

O LOVING Jesus ! open Thy Sacred Heart to me, show me Its charms, unite me to It for ever : may every breath I draw, every beating of my heart, be so many proofs of my love ; and remind Thee, that I belong entirely to Thee, O Lord. Receive graciously, O my God, the small amount of good I am able to do each day ; so that I may bless Thee in this life, and praise Thee for all eternity. Amen.

O GOD, Who by the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin, didst prepare a fit habitation for Thy Son, we beseech Thee, that as by the foreseen Death of her same Son, Thou didst preserve her pure from all spot, so Thou wilt likewise grant, that by her intercession we may be made free from sin, and attain unto Thee. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

WE fly to thy patronage, O holy Mother of God ; despise not our petitions in our necessities, but deliver us always from all dangers, O glorious and blessed Virgin.

MEDITATIONS.

Second Week after Easter.—Sunday.

Jesus fulfilling the Office of the Good Shepherd.

I am the Good Shepherd.—S. JOHN X.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent to ourselves our Lord Jesus Christ under the form of a Shepherd ; carrying on His Shoulders a sheep which had gone astray.

· II. PRELUDE.

O Good Pastor of our souls, discover to us Thy sheep, the tenderness Thou hast for each one ; and may we never wander away from Thy Fold.

I. POINT.

Jesus possesses all the qualifications of a Good Shepherd.

The most favoured portion of the flock of Jesus Christ consists of those privileged sheep, whom in a particular manner he has chosen to be His own : those faithful ones

who remain near the Shepherd, under His immediate care—in His Presence. Without doubt Jesus knows well each one of His sheep. *I know My sheep, and Mine know Me.* He loves them all; He nourishes them, seeks for those that stray, and rescues such as have run into the danger of being destroyed by the devouring wolves: but His tenderest regard is for those whose love now responds to His own. It may be so, that some have never been entangled in the toils woven by the spirits of evil, while others have escaped from them; these having been *much forgiven, love much.* His own sheep have been led by the Good Shepherd into the *place of pasture*—His Church; and are nourished by His Sacred Word, the holy Sacraments, and accompanying gifts of grace. The Divine Food of the Eucharist He daily dispenses to those who remain nearest to Himself—under the shadow of His protection—within the inner circle of constant recollection and solid virtue. If we belong to this favoured flock, happy are we!

II. POINT.

We must evidence our appreciation of the privileges we enjoy.

My sheep hear My Voice; and I know them, and they follow Me. And I will give them life everlasting, and they shall not perish for ever, and no man shall pluck them out of My Hand. In these words Jesus points out the distinguishing qualifications of the good and faithful *people of His pasture—the sheep of His Hand.* They listen to the silent Voice of His Holy Spirit. Although He desires to make His Voice to be heard, and to converse with us Heart to heart, we shall fail to catch His words and their deep signification, if we are pre-occupied with engrossing thoughts

of self ; or allow a thousand trifles to cause excitement in our imagination. *If you shall hear His Voice harden not your hearts* by any rebellious course, which might tend to exclude Its gentle sound. And as the ear of the soul must be ever attentively listening, so must the eye be turned towards Him, to watch the movements of His grace, and to see in what direction it will guide us : For, adds the Good Shepherd, *My sheep follow Me*. We must walk in His Footsteps—doing the same actions, having the same will, the same ends in view. We must go after Him into the valleys of humility, or climb the rugged steepes of adversity ; pass across the arid plains of desolation, or gather together around Him to feed in the green pastures of spiritual refreshments, and to drink of the living waters of His consolations. All our attention will be needed whenever we are near to danger—so easily increased by any turning back from following Jesus ; or by loitering at one stage, when He is calling us on to another. We should not linger behind, nor go in advance of God's grace. *To-day—now, if you shall hear His Voice*, be obedient to It ; so shall we never perish, but passing at length through the shadow of death, the Good Shepherd will call us each one by name, and lead us within those gates which need *not be shut by day—and there is no night there*.

COLLOQUY.

O Jesus, Good Shepherd, I feel how eternally indebted I am to Thee for the signal favour Thou hast granted me, in admitting me amongst the sheep of Thy True Fold. How much love and gratitude do I not owe Thee ! May this thought make me more attentive in listening to Thy Voice, and watching Thy directing Hand. Lead me where Thou wilt ; only give me grace never to lose sight of Thee.

I pray for those who are straying in self-chosen fields of earthly pleasure, or in the bye-ways of spiritual error : bring them also, O Lord, that there may be *one Fold and one Shepherd*.

RESOLUTION.

Not to lose sight of Jesus, and to listen to His Voice.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

The Good Shepherd giveth His Life for His sheep.

PRAYER.

Take, O Lord, and receive.

Second Week after Easter.—Monday.

Two Disciples go to Emmaus.

While they talked and reasoned with themselves, JESUS also Himself drawing near, went with them.—S. LUKE XXIV.

I. PRELUDE.

We represent to ourselves the two Disciples on their way from Jerusalem to Emmaus ; their thoughts were occupied with Jesus, Who joined them, and talked with them.

II. PRELUDE.

Increase in us, O Lord, Thy all-powerful grace ; strengthened by it in the belief of Thy Divinity, may we per-

severingly labour to promote our spiritual advancement, whatever be the difficulties we have to encounter.

I. POINT.

In the midst of trials, we should be on our guard lest our faith become enfeebled, through want of perseverance.

What would have become of these two Disciples, if the Son of God had not come to their assistance? Their faith and hope in Jesus, their love for Him, were so weakened, that they seemed on the point of falling away from Him altogether. But the Good Shepherd goes after these sheep, who were wandering from His Fold; He introduces Himself to them with His ordinary gentleness of manner, and prepares them to receive the reproof it was necessary to administer: *O foolish and slow of heart to believe in all things which the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and so to have entered into His glory?* These words indicate two dangers in the way of perseverance, in the spiritual life. The first is, the little care that is taken to rightly investigate the maxims of the Gospel,—those maxims which are so contrary to the tendencies of corrupt nature, since they are founded upon the Mystery of the Cross: the second danger is, want of courage to take these maxims as the rule of our conduct. Do we not believe that it is only by the way of the Cross that we shall enter Heaven?—by the way of suffering, of humility, of self-abnegation?—Are we well assured of this fact? Must we not own that our Lord's reprimand might be addressed to us also: *O foolish and slow of heart?* how weak is your courage, how languishing your love! how much reason have you to be abashed before Me, Who did not hesitate to suffer and to die; thereby to open the kingdom of Heaven to you. *Be ye wise at last.*

II. POINT.

In the spiritual life, we must not be discouraged by the trials and delays wherewith God may prove us.

In considering the conduct of the two Disciples, we perceive two further defects of the human heart, regarding which we should take precautions. They are sloth and inconstancy,—which cause us to become discouraged, and to give up at the approach of the first real difficulty. Our Saviour had warned His Disciples that He should leave them for a little while, adding that He would be crucified, but *after three days rise from the dead*—and that they should see Him again. Three days was a short space of time, but before it had expired, the patience of Cleophas and his companion was exhausted; they left the company of the Apostles, and in all probability would never have returned, had not Jesus Himself gone in search of them. Such is our impatience too, even in the all-important matter of our salvation. When it is a question of acquiring some virtue, of fighting against some defect, three days of labour, fatigue and weary us. Perhaps we have, under the influence of a good inspiration, and because of the attractiveness of a holy life, said within ourselves: I will arise out of my lethargy, and begin in earnest to do all for God:—we take a few steps, then growing weary, remain where we are; we find the enterprise tests our patience and perseverance too severely. We should learn to mistrust hastily formed projects, of doing a great deal in a little while; and that over-eagerness which expects to arrive at perfection in a few days—perhaps hours! *Patience hath a perfect work*—constant, regular,—ending only when Heaven is won.

COLLOQUY.

O Divine Saviour, how great is my weakness ! strengthen, I beseech Thee, my faith and my love, that both may remain unshaken in the midst of trials; may I bear patiently the delays wherewith my patience may be tried ; and calmly wait for the realisation of Thy promises, without becoming weary of the labour and trouble necessary for my spiritual advancement. Let nothing deter me from serving Thee, O Good Master ; but make my love even to increase, in times of adversity.

RESOLUTION.

To be courageous and persevering in the work of my own perfection.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and so to enter into His glory ?

PRAYER.

Our Father, and Hail Mary.

Second Week after Easter.—Tuesday.

Jesus appears to the two Disciples going to Emmaus.

Jesus drawing near, went with them.—S. LUKE XXIV.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us again represent to ourselves how our Saviour, on

the same day that He rose from the dead, appeared to the two Disciples.

II. PRELUDE.

O Jesus, grant that responding to the advances of Thy grace, we may render ourselves worthy of the love wherewith Thou hast sought us out, when we have gone astray.

I. POINT.

The kindness and charity with which Jesus brought back the two Disciples into the path of duty.

We have meditated upon the departure of Cleophas and his companion from Jerusalem ; to-day we may contemplate the charity which the Son of God exercised on their behalf. They had gone astray, but he would not leave them without His succour ; so having drawn near, He continued to walk beside them, that He might gain some influence over their hearts and minds, by His friendly words of instruction and counsel. O Loving Jesus, it is thus that Thou dost ever strive to recall sinners. The same mercy which had caused Thee to wait by Jacob's Well for the Samaritan woman ; and to accept the invitation of Simon the Pharisee, in order to give Mary Magdalene an opportunity of seeking forgiveness, now caused Thee to walk to Emmaus. What simple means, and yet what great results ! It is in the daily occurrences of life that our Lord takes part with us. Deign, O Jesus, to be ever in the midst of us, and to exercise the same divine thoughtfulness in our regard. When we stray in consequence of the weakness of our faith and love, or of any distinct dereliction of duty, draw near, O Jesus, and speak with us ; and show us how to believe in Thee more confidently, to love Thee more truly, and to avoid all that may offend Thee more resolutely.

II. POINT.

The wisdom of the plan adopted by our Lord, with regard to the two Disciples.

In the first place, Jesus took the same road as they did ; having overtaken them, He suited His conversation to their capacity for understanding, what He would convey to their minds.—We mark the effects of His wisdom, for they yield to the arguments of their unrecognised Master. How wonderful is the operation of grace in the soul ! how marvellous the concessions granted by the Spirit of God, Who condescends to the weakness of man, and wins his consent to what is right, without doing violence to his liberty of action ! Jesus, on that Easter morning, took the form of a gardener, so that Mary Magdalene might interrogate Him on the matter nearest to her heart ; in the evening He appeared as a traveller, to again effect His purpose of love.—He makes Himself all to all ; and comes to us in various ways, to console, to instruct, and to save. Can we number the good inspirations, instructions, counsels, and consolations, we have received from Him ? Can we fail to observe how well-timed are His visits ? how appropriate His marks of attention ?

COLLOQUY.

O Almighty Lord, Thou Who hast unlimited power over all things, how wonderful art Thou in Thy gentleness, Thy wisdom, Thy charity ! With Thee, to will is to do,—they are one and the same thing, because Thou dost judge dispassionately ; and Thy action of grace is always proportional to our requirements. Compassionating my weaknesses, condescending to my wishes, Thou dost respect my

free-will ; and leavest to me the merit of making a choice in favour of what is right. As I perceive the care and watchfulness Thou hast in my regard, so may I imitate Thy goodness in my intercourse with others ; acting with fore-thought, prudence, and charity.

RESOLUTION.

To repay with gratitude the kind and gracious attention manifested by Jesus towards me.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Jesus drawing near, went with them.

PRAYER.

Our Father, and Hail Mary.

Second Week after Easter.—Wednesday.

The Disciples going to Emmaus mistook Jesus for a Stranger.

Art Thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things that have been done there in these days ?—S. LUKE XXIV.

I. PRELUDE.

We see the two Disciples in the Presence of Jesus, but they fail to recognise Him : their eyes are held, so that they could not do so.

II. PRELUDE.

O Divine Saviour, grant that our hearts may never lose the sense of Thy Sacred Presence.

I. POINT.

The Disciples do not recognise their Master.

Was it the weakness of their faith, or was it the want of purity of heart, which prevented them from knowing their Lord again? They were in His Presence—they heard Him speak—they saw Him, but still they did not recognise His Sacred Person. Mary Magdalene had not done so either. We may deduce from this, that Jesus must be willing to manifest Himself: this manifestation, even to those who are well disposed, He either withholds or permits according to the degree of purity of heart attained by them. *Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God.* Human passions form a dark veil which hides Jesus from our sight, hinders us from distinguishing His Voice, and enjoying the sweetness of His Presence. Nothing is more dangerous to a soul than defect of zeal in maintaining great purity of heart—making little of little sins. Besides the risk they involve us in, of losing our salvation, they deprive us of the possession of interior peace; and of real communication with God in prayer. The soul should resemble a clear mirror, in which God may be reflected, so that we may recognise Him therein: but can this be so, if the breath of the world destroy its lustre? or it be soiled by the dust of little sins?

II. POINT.

Jesus becomes a traveller to show that He will be our Companion in the pilgrimage of this life.

The more we study our Lord, the more we discover His love and tenderness towards His Elect. Destined to pass years (all too prolonged) in this sad exile, we are liable to incur many dangers, and great risks of being lost: but Jesus, our Best Friend, foreseeing how hazardous our path through life may prove, and that we shall have to fight with many enemies, has resolved to be Himself our Companion—our Guide—and our Protector. We have seen Him abase Himself even to us in His Incarnation, we have seen that He was born, and lived—like us, and amongst us—and died. Thus He has prepared, by His example, that road which will lead us directly to the happy end of our journey; and has made clear to us, by His doctrine, the line of conduct we should make our own; and He fails not to point out besides, the snares and precipices we should avoid. He will be with us *even to the consummation of the world*; strengthening each one of His Elect with a wholesome and most sweet Nourishment, to enable them to bear up under the difficulties of travelling; and to ensure their safety in the midst of danger. Jesus promises all this. Can we prefer to walk alone? are we prepared to take the risks of this journey to eternity upon ourselves? without a guide? without an escort?

COLLOQUY.

O Heavenly Protector! how boundless should be my gratitude, since Thou hast undertaken, during the wearisome pilgrimage of this life, to be my Companion. I entrust myself wholly to Thy guidance; confident that Thou wilt bring me safe to my journey's end. Let me recognise Thee—love Thy Presence; and depend for sustenance upon the celestial Manna, Thou dost provide for me by the way.

RESOLUTION.

To re-kindle in myself the desire to have Jesus ever near me.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Perfect Thou my goings in Thy paths : that my footsteps be not moved.

PRAYER.

Soul of Christ.

Second Week after Easter.—Thursday.**The necessity of Sufferings and of Crosses.**

Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and so to enter into His glory?—S. LUKE XXIV.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us listen to the words spoken by Jesus, in allusion to the sufferings He had so lately undergone, as He accompanied the Disciples to Emmaus.

II. PRELUDE.

Give us, O Lord, a practical understanding of the Mystery of being fitted for a life of glory, by means of suffering.

I. POINT.

Like these two Disciples, we too little esteem our crosses.

During the Life of the Son of God, so long as He showed Himself to be mighty in word and deed, all His Disciples had a high idea of Him; they had acknowledged Him to be a great Prophet, and looked to Him for the redemption of Israel: but on account of His apparent weakness—His powerlessness—when in the hands of His enemies, and His ignominious Death, many were scandalised. The esteem they had conceived for Him greatly decreased; they failed to comprehend how He could be their Saviour. This was the reason why our Lord found it necessary to reprehend the two Disciples with an earnestness worthy of His paternal goodness; and why, to fortify their faith, He went on to show that His Death (which had proved to them a stumbling-block) was the cause of that Life of glory—to enter upon which it had been needful that He should suffer the shameful death of the Cross. Are we not, alas! subject to the same weakness of faith? When all succeeds according to our desires, we have a high idea of God, and entire confidence in His goodness; but when He places us upon the Cross, when He gives us some suffering to bear, then we are apt to grow discouraged; we murmur, and begin to doubt His love. And yet, this is the very moment when we might rightly indulge in higher hopes, as brighter prospects open out before us; for does not each cross give fresh assurance of the glory awaiting us in Heaven. If it were *expedient that Christ should suffer*, because the Heavenly Father had so ordained it, is it not necessary that, for the same reason, each one of us should be sanctified through patient endurance? It is written: *that the kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence*; and that if we would share in the risen and glorified Life of Jesus, we must pass through afflictions with Him. Then in our case too, as in His, the Scriptures will be fulfilled:

through many tribulations we shall enter into the kingdom of God.

II. POINT.

The Cross is the Key of Heaven.

If God offers us an opportunity of enduring something for Him, let us say : The Father of my Saviour ordains this for me ; His Will be done. If we are not ready to do violence to self-will, we shall never be freed from our passions ; we shall never acquire solid virtue. The necessary remedies must be adopted, if we would gain spiritual health ; we must accept the bitterness now, if we would taste the sweetness hereafter. *The Chalice which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it ?* If the Son of God, All-innocent as He was, made use of suffering as a means whereby to attain and ensure His future glory as the Son of Man, let us seriously ask ourselves if we can hope to attain and ensure the same glory, unless we employ the same means. Can we expect to reach the same Home by a different path ? It is the Cross, which we carry, that will unlock the gates of Eternity. Shall we lay aside the Key which will enable us to enter the Treasure-house of inexhaustible riches ? and put us in possession of that mansion in the Golden City, which our Lord has prepared for each one of those who shall have patiently endured unto the end ?

COLLOQUY.

O my God, pity my weakness and my ignorance ; and give me to understand and love the mysterious Cross.—May I, like Jesus, *having the joy set before me, endure the Cross, and despise the shame ;* and remember constantly, that it is through suffering I shall merit the enjoyment of celestial

happiness; through toil I shall gain true repose; and through humiliation enter into glory.

RESOLUTION.

Instead of being discouraged at the thought of the sufferings of this life, to rejoice that God deals with me, as He dealt with His Own Dear Son.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and so to enter into His glory?

PRAYER.

Take, O Lord, and receive.

Second Week after Easter.—Friday.

The Disciples on arriving at Emmaus, ask Jesus to remain with them.

Stay with us, because it is towards evening, and the day is now far spent.—S. LUKE XXIV.

I. PRELUDE.

We may picture to ourselves the arrival of the two Disciples at Emmaus; and the fervour with which they constrain our Lord to remain at their house.

II. PRELUDE.

Divine Saviour, grant that being instructed by Thee, and

knowing more and more of Thyself, we may feel that we could not live without Thee.

I. POINT.

The spiritual delights which the faithful soul experiences in the Presence of God.

The Disciples of Emmaus, having heard Jesus speak, although they did not know Him again, were conscious of a strong attraction towards Him: what would have been their feelings had they at once recognised their Master!—what their joy, their happiness! In the same way the faithful soul—one absolutely detached from all creatures, and seeking only God, His love, His glory, His good pleasure—this soul, to whom God communicates Himself in a hidden manner, enjoys, even in this life, consolations incomparably greater than all those of which we can form any idea; unless, by happy experience, we know what they are. They who have left all for God, find all in Him: they have renounced that which pleases the natural senses; but they taste, in possessing their God, most pure delights. All unknown to others, they are listening to the prelude of that heavenly harmony which will entrance the Elect throughout eternity. They find an inexpressible charm in seeking and finding God in the ordinary events of every-day life: they walk with God—converse familiarly with Him—hear His Voice and obey It.

II. POINT.

When the soul appears to be deprived of spiritual consolation, it is the moment to entreat Jesus not to withdraw Himself.

Stay with us, because it is towards evening, and the day

is now far spent. The mid-day hour of spiritual consolation may pass away; and the soul, even of a true child of God may be deprived of the light of His Countenance, and find itself in the midst of obscurity. Indeed, there is no doubt that it is by means of privations and trials of this kind, that we are perfected in virtue. At all times God has shown that it is thus He exercises those that are really His friends; causing them to pass through seasons of bitter adversity, so that He may be more glorified, and they may amass greater merit. Virtues become more solid, more perfect, more real, in the hour of trial. It is not difficult to despise human sympathy, when we distinctly feel that God sympathises with us; but it is the essence of true virtue to bear the loss of all consolation, both human and divine, without anxiety—without self-pity. It is grace alone that can give us courage so to act in the time of desolation; when the sunshine of God's Presence seems about to be withdrawn, then let us say: *O Lord, stay with me*: if I may no longer hear Thy Voice, assure me that Thou wilt not go far from me: stay with me through the hours of darkness, lest I wander from Thee, and my enemies say, *Where is thy God?* Is this the way in which we address our Lord? is it thus we *constrain Him to abide with us?*

COLLOQUY.

I entreat Thee, O my God, not to forsake me. Thou knowest how quickly, and how far too, I may go astray, unless Thou stayest by my side. If Thou art pleased to try me by the withdrawal of Thy sensible Presence, yet, in reality, leave me not. Take from me, if Thou wilt, health, earthly goods, the esteem of men,—despoil me of all that may be gratifying to nature—to self-love; but deprive me not of the best, the highest object of my ambi-

tion, that I possess Thee entirely—that *Thou stay with me.*

RESOLUTION.

Often to ask Jesus to communicate Himself to my soul.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Stay with me, for it is towards evening.

PRAYER.

O Jesus, living in Mary.

Second Week after Easter.—Saturday.

Our Lord yields to the entreaty of the Disciples at Emmaus, and makes himself known to them in the Breaking of Bread.

He went in with them : Their eyes were opened, and they knew Him.—S. LUKE XXIV.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent to ourselves our Divine Lord making Himself known to Cleophas and his friend, on the evening of the Day of His Resurrection.

II. PRELUDE.

O Jesus, wilt Thou not yield, if we too entreat Thee not to leave us without some farther manifestation of Thyself?

so that we may know Thee better, and understand the Mysteries of Thy Resurrection more thoroughly.

I. POINT.

Jesus enters the house of Cleophas.

Although our Lord *made as though He would go farther*, His intention was to reveal Himself to the Disciples as their Master, in consequence of their earnest prayer. Jesus is constrained by our hearty desires, when they are in accordance with His own Will. Some special benediction is only waiting, for our supplications to bring it down from the Hand of God—and it may often be, that *we have not, because we ask not*. What a pity! We catch a glimpse, it may be, of what Jesus is—of His goodness—His wisdom. Why do we not pray Him to enter into our hearts, to instruct us farther, to abide with us? to make us ready to retrace our steps, if we have left the path of duty? to open our eyes to see our inconstancy? and how true, and worthy of our confidence He is? He changes not, His promises are sure. And we lose so many graces because we ask so listlessly for the abiding Presence of Jesus—for an advance in holiness—to be admitted to a more intimate friendship with our Lord. How is it that we are so reserved towards Him? so slow to ask Him to do us a favour? Why is not the guest-chamber of our heart at all times prepared, for the reception of our Divine Visitor?

II. POINT.

Jesus made Himself known to the Disciples in the Breaking of Bread.

In our preparation for Holy Communion, we beseech our

Dear Lord to enter into our hearts ; we offer Him our warmest welcome ; we place ourselves completely at His disposal ; we give Him our entire attention. And He, on His part, in giving us the True Bread Which came down from Heaven, opens the eyes of our understanding ; and augments our knowledge of Himself. He intensifies our perception of spiritual things ; and so strengthens our faith, that if He withdraw His sensible Presence, we, like the Disciples, have no doubt that it is Jesus Who has been with us.—Though *He vanish*, as it were, *out of our sight*, we rise up the same hour to put in practice those virtues, which His Visit has produced and increased in us. We ask ourselves in what way we can prove our gratitude, or make reparation for past infidelities. From the Gospel narrative, we find the Disciples left Emmaus again at once, to see the Apostles, and avow their mistake in having refused to believe the testimony of the holy Women, although it agreed with the express words of their Master : *that He would rise again the third day*.—If the Life of Jesus, imparted in Holy Communion, be duly manifested in us, we shall console our Mother, the Church ; and glorify God.

COLLOQUY.

O Jesus, Who didst once again, at Emmaus, prove Thy willingness to forgive those whose belief in Thee had faltered, do Thou pardon my want of faith ; and graciously accept the invitation I give Thee to come and dwell in my heart. Make Thyself known to me, and show me how I can best please Thee, my Divine Guest.—Implant new virtues in my heart ; make me ready to follow the dictates of Thy holy inspirations ; and to proclaim my belief in Thy glorious Resurrection, by living not to myself, but unto Him Who died for me, and rose again.

RESOLUTION.

To welcome Jesus with greater affection, when He comes to visit me in Holy Communion.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

They knew Him in the Breaking of Bread.

PRAYER.

Soul of Christ.

Third Week after Easter.—Sunday.

Jesus upholds the courage of the Apostles.

Amen, Amen, I say to you, that you shall lament and weep, but the world shall rejoice: and you shall be made sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.—S. JOHN XVI.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent to ourselves Jesus speaking to the Apostles, before His Death, of His Ascension. He desired to forewarn them of the tribulation which would be their portion in this life.

II. PRELUDE.

Give us grace, O Jesus, to bear with loving submission, the trials and afflictions through which it may please Thee we should pass.

I. POINT.

The afflictions to which the just are subject.

However entirely some holy souls may appear to be exempt from the afflictions of this life, there is, nevertheless, in the very practice of virtue itself, much that gives constant rise to pain and sorrow.—Regret for our faults—the revolt of evil inclinations—temptations—interior trials—inevitable difficulties attending every condition of life (hidden though they may often be)—all concur to make us suffer. God permits it so to be, that by this means forming a closer resemblance to the Chief of the Elect—His Beloved Son, Who suffered from His Birth until His Death—we should have a greater share in His eternal bliss. *You shall lament and weep*, He said to His chosen Disciples, *but the world shall rejoice*. Grief and tears are the lot of the just, and it is of the first importance that they should bear their sorrows as Christians. Sorrows may be real or imaginary, but if, with regard to either, we indulge in useless, self-pitying reflections, we lose the peace of our soul. And should we seek to blunt them by means of wordly pleasures, or murmur against those who may have caused us grief, we offend God, and are far from profiting by our trials. But if, on the contrary, imitating the Divine Master, we keep silence, uttering no complaints, no reproaches, and desire no consolation than that which He may Himself bestow, then indeed we shall be agreeable in the Sight of God. We shall be at the same time *laying up to ourselves treasures in Heaven*. Suffer we must: trials will not cease—temptations are never far off,—but our courage cannot fail to be renewed as we remember that, *that which is at present light and momentary of our tribulation, worketh for us above measure exceedingly, an eternal weight of glory*.

II. POINT.

Further encouragement to bear afflictions in a right spirit.

Let us turn our attention to the encouraging words spoken by our Saviour, after He had announced to the Apostles that they were to be deprived of His Presence ; and that their future lives would be marked by trial and suffering : *Your sorrow shall be turned into joy.* He seems still to be addressing these words of hope to each one of us, as He sees us struggling against the tide of affliction, towards the eternal shore. They sustain us now, as they have in all ages sustained the faith and courage of His true servants. The Saints have all suffered, but they have been content to suffer ; they have wept, but their hearts have been inundated with the sweetest assurances of God's love. How have the Martyrs and Confessors rejoiced that they have been accounted worthy to endure ! How often have prison-walls echoed strains of joy, wherewith happy captives have praised their Lord for the grace of suffering ! Does the promise given by Jesus fill us also with confidence ? do we, in the strength of it, anticipate the joy that will obliterate even the remembrance of our present sorrows ? Jesus reckons them up ; He is watching our combats ; He will shield us from actual danger, and cover us with His protection. And if we desire a further incentive to excite us even to deeds of heroic courage, we may see by faith, the bright crown which Jesus is inlaying with the gems of our tears, and the jewels of affliction. These precious offerings we make to Him in the midst of sufferings, patiently borne ; and He accepts them to enrich the diadem which is to be the reward of endurance—our recompense for having been *faithful unto death.*

COLLOQUY.

O my Divine Saviour, Thou dost uphold me in all the labours and combats, which form so large a portion of my service for Thee : with what goodness dost Thou encourage me to look beyond the trials and sorrows of this life ! And yet I fear that I have hitherto glorified Thee so little in the hour of suffering ; that I have even offended Thee by my impatient and murmuring spirit. I beseech Thee to forgive me ; and to fill my soul with a desire to work and to suffer in a more truly heroic spirit.—May Thy love animate me, Thy promises encourage me, and Thy example support me ! Then at last, I shall have the happiness of finding my *sorrow turned into joy*.

RESOLUTION.

Uniting to the sufferings of Jesus all my difficulties and vexations, I will bear them joyfully for love of Him.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Your sorrow shall be turned into joy.

PRAYER.

Take, O Lord, and receive.

Third Week after Easter.—Monday.

Jesus appears to the assembled Apostles.

Now when it was late, that same day, and the doors were shut where the Disciples were gathered together, for fear of

the Jews, JESUS came and stood in the midst, and said to them : Peace be to you : And when he had said this, He shewed them His Hands and His Side : The Disciples therefore were glad when they saw the Lord.—S. JOHN XX.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us go in spirit to that Upper Room where the Disciples are assembled, to share with them in the grace they are about to receive.

II. PRELUDE.

Make us to know, O Lord, the bounty of Thy Adorable Heart ; and deign to inspire us with those sentiments of confidence and of love towards God which Thou desirest to find in us.

I. POINT.

The Presence of Jesus banishes fear.

The Disciples were assembled together to speak about their Master ; they had all the appearance of being anxious and fearful : the doors were carefully fastened lest they should be surprised by any enemies. Whence came this want of courage ? Because their faith was weak, and their confidence in the power of Jesus was weaker still. Is it not to like causes that we may attribute our frequent falls when tempted, and our little fervour in His service ? It is certain that if we had a lively trust in His power, we should promptly have recourse to its protection at the approach of our enemies ; and far from being discouraged, we should at all times glorify Him by our bravery and devotedness. Our Divine Lord, knowing how much they stood in need of His help, came to encourage and strengthen His timid Disciples.

He presented Himself in their midst; but they, supposing they saw a spirit, were seized with alarm. He speaks: *Peace be to you; it is I, fear not*: I am come to console you for My absence, to verify My words, to shew you My wounded Hands, and Feet, and Side; to strengthen your belief in My Divinity—to ask for your love. *It is I, fear not*. Come then, O Jesus, and visit us also: arouse our inanimate faith, and revive our drooping hopes. Well mayst Thou reproachfully ask of us, as Thou didst of the Apostles: *Why are you troubled, and why do thoughts arise in your hearts?* All we can do, O Lord, is to beg of Thee to give us that *perfect charity which casteth out fear*. This is the sovereign remedy for all trouble and inquietude.

II. POINT.

The condescension of Jesus.

The Apostles, seeing their Master thus miraculously appear before them, were affrighted; and He, in order to re-assure them, shewed them His Wounds, and invited them to touch His Sacred Person, that they might be the more convinced in this manner of His identity. Having appealed thus forcibly to their sense of sight and touch, He condescended to eat with them. Although His glorified Body needed no sustenance, our Lord would leave no action unperformed which could convince them more thoroughly, that He had re-assumed that same Body which His Soul had forsaken, as It hung, three days before, upon the Cross. How condescending is the love of Jesus, how wonderful its sweetness—its patience! Like a tender Father He understands the weakness of His children, and stoops to adapt Himself to their (at present) limited comprehension of the Mysteries enacted before their eyes. They are still the

illiterate fishermen of Galilee ! Again : like a true Friend, He forgets all their ungenerous behaviour towards Himself, and contrives fresh means of benefiting them. Who can be so callous as to remain unmoved by the boundless goodness of the Sacred Heart, as exemplified in this Apparition of Jesus to the Apostles ? Let us make protestations of our love for Him, Who in causing Himself thus to be recognised by them, makes Himself to be better known also to ourselves. We can take part in the joy which the visit of the Risen Lord occasioned the Disciples : happy in His Presence, they lose all anxiety, and rejoice in the glorious victory won by their Master : *Whom having not seen, we love.* The gladness they experienced, we experience also.

COLLOQUY.

My Jesus, with Thy rejoicing Disciples, I prostrate myself at Thy Feet. I adore and thank Thee with all my heart, because of the glory Thy Resurrection has procured for Thee, and for us. By it do Thou confirm my faith ; and while increasing my confidence, increase also my love, and tranquillity, and holy joy,—the unfailing effects of Thy Presence, in which let me ever remain.

RESOLUTION.

To do all my actions in a spirit of holy joy, as in the Presence of Jesus.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Peace be to you ! it is I, fear not.

PRAYER.

Take, O Lord, and receive.

Third Week after Easter.—Tuesday.

Jesus appears to His Apostles, bringing the gift of Peace.

Peace be to you : it is I, fear not.—S. LUKE XXIV.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent to ourselves the disquieted Disciples : full of anxious fear, they have fastened the doors of the place where they are assembled. Jesus, the Prince of Peace, appears amongst them.

II. PRELUDE.

Deign, O Lord, to make us understand the excellence of the gift Thou didst bestow on Thy Disciples, that we may be better prepared to receive it.

I. POINT.

Peace of the soul is one of the most precious gifts God can bestow.

The better to appreciate its excellence, we should consider how this divine peace calms the agitation and revolts of the mind ; appeases the various and troubled emotions of the heart ; subdues the passions ; and produces an entire submission of the powers of the soul to the Will of God. This peace has its origin in divine love ; for if we love God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, we become so devoted to His cause, that all which is pleasing to Him necessarily pleases us. To possess God by means

of love—this supplies for every want, and consoles us under every trial. Whatever adversities assail a soul filled with divine love, the peace of which it is possessed is unalterable: if despised or forsaken by creatures, it finds in God all that it can desire of joy and happiness. It may be that we are a prey to suffering ; but we rest content in knowing that God counts each pain we bear ; poverty and privations will not affect us, if thereby *we are laying up to ourselves treasures in Heaven*. The heart is never at rest until it finds its repose in God, but it enjoys a profound peace, and perfect joy when it has sought it in Him alone. O Jesus, Prince of Peace ! enter into our hearts and bring that real peace, which is the portion of Thy true children.

II. POINT.

Means of preserving this peace of the soul.

However confirmed we may be in this grace of peace, since there is nothing stable in this life, we ought to make use of the means recommended by masters of the spiritual life, for the maintaining of this interior peace. Firstly : we must endeavour to augment divine charity within our souls by making frequent acts of love ; these cement the union between God and ourselves, and prove our readiness to acquiesce under all circumstances, in His good pleasure. Secondly: we should avoid with much care, the very smallest faults ; for purity of heart is the companion of union with the Centre of true repose. Thirdly: we are advised to watch constantly against the divers emotions of anger and vexation, impatience and pride, which passion excites in our hearts ; stifling or calming down at once any agitated feelings to which these may so easily give rise. Fourthly: we ought to prefer to have less than more—to moderate our desires—to

do rather the will of others than our own—to seek always the lowest place—and to yield to others in a spirit of charity. Fifthly : we do well to consider the calmness of the Son of God ; and often to ask Him, with the whole Church, to give us that priceless peace which the world knows not.

COLLOQUY.

O Jesus, Thou desirest that I should serve Thee in peace, therefore aid me with Thy powerful grace, which will cause me to triumph over nature—over myself ; and render me entirely submissive to the guidance of Thy Holy Spirit. I know that I must first destroy all that may trouble, hinder or diminish this peace of the soul ; and then maintain and strengthen it by a perfect conformity of thought and will, with the sentiments of Thy Divine Heart.

RESOLUTION.

To establish the reign of peace within my soul, I will practise the means proposed ; particularly such as I feel will help me most.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

O Lord, give me Thy peace, which surpasseth all understanding.

PRAYER.

O Jesus, living in Mary.

Third Week after Easter.—Wednesday.

Appearing to His Apostles, Jesus shews them His Wounds.

See My Hands and Feet, that it is I Myself: And He shewed them His Side.—S. LUKE XXIV. ; S. JOHN XX.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us go in spirit to the Upper-Room, and see our Saviour pointing out to the Disciples His glorious Wounds.

II. PRELUDE.

By Thy Sacred Wounds, which contributed so powerfully to Thy greater glory, may we understand that nothing is more honourable, nothing more salutary for a true Christian than to suffer in the service of God ; and to retain marks of suffering.

I. POINT.

Jesus, in His Resurrection, preserves the Scars of His Wounds, to teach us to glory in suffering for His Sake.

What indeed could be more honourable than suffering, since the Son of God willed to preserve the precious Marks of that which He endured ! thereby to enhance the beauty of His glorified Body. They appeared on It, in brilliant splendour, forming the trophy of His Victory, and the pledge of our salvation and our future glory—merited by His Passion. Yes ! nothing can be more glorious than suffering, because Jesus, in His Own Person, has so rendered it ; and

this is why the true children of God are so happy, and feel themselves so honoured, if permitted to share in that which was inflicted on His Beloved Son. He drank the very dregs of His cup of sorrows, and having taken away the bitterness, has filled up the same cup for us with a draught, which turns to sweetness as we put it to our lips. Hence it is that poverty, mortification, the pardon of injuries, and the other evangelical virtues—the practice of which was formerly so difficult perhaps—appears now to be delightful to those who have contracted a spiritual union with the Son of God. We shall understand this marvellous teaching if, within His Wounds, we taste in silence and recollection the sweetness of His divine consolations.

II. POINT.

The Wounds of Jesus have a salutary effect on us.

Let us consider how far our Saviour has carried His loving tenderness for us, His children. From us He has received these Wounds, and yet He makes them to be the source of our salvation. He has preserved them as so many entrances, by which we reach His Divine Heart, the Fountain of every grace. They may be considered also as holy places of retreat, into which Jesus invites us ; there to find strength in our weakness ; peace in time of adversity ; rest and confidence in the hour of discouragement. He points out His Wounds as the safe refuge, in which none can perish, however sorely assaulted by temptation. If the remembrance of our past sins give rise to trouble and fear, with the penitent Magdalene we will kiss the Wounds of His Sacred Feet ; in so doing we shall find the consolation needed by our sorrow-stricken souls, while our Saviour lifts His pierced Hands to give us the blessing of peace. Whatever our

wants, or spiritual maladies may be, we can draw from the Precious Wounds all the help that we require; for they are channels to us of mercy and of grace.

COLLOQUY.

O my Saviour, in shewing Thy Wounds to Thy Apostles, Thou dost also shew them to me, the last and least of Thy disciples; and as I gaze upon them, I beseech of Thee to fill me with lively sorrow for my sins, so that I may be purified from them. Directed by the love with which they inspire me, I desire to be received within Thy Divine Heart; the place of my rest, and the abode of true happiness.

RESOLUTION.

In all my trials and afflictions to take refuge in the Wounds of My Saviour.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

See! it is I Myself.

PRAYER.

Soul of Christ.

Third Week after Easter.—Thursday.

Jesus gives His Apostles power to remit sins.

As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you: When He had said this, He breathed on them; and He said to them: Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them: and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained.—S. JOHN XX.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us again see the assembled Apostles, and their Risen Lord addressing them.

II. PRELUDE.

Fill us, O Lord, with lively gratitude as we meditate upon the power of forgiving sins, granted to Thy Church.

I. POINT.

The goodness of Jesus is manifested towards us by the institution of the Sacrament of Penance.

Receive you the Holy Ghost : Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them. The Heart of our Divine Master is an abyss of mercy. Having descended from Heaven to save sinners, He shed for them the last drop of His Blood. This Precious Blood was designed to purify us in the Sacrament of Regeneration ; and through our divine adoption as children of God, to re-invest us by means of Its virtue, with divine rights and privileges. But, ungrateful children as we have proved ourselves to be, we have abused these graces, and again lost the gift of innocence. Jesus has therefore willed, in His tender solicitude, to contrive another resource, to give us a perpetual means of raising ourselves after our falls. By an excess of goodness, which could only find a place in the Heart of God, He assigns neither bounds nor limits to the power He gives His Apostles for the justifying of sinners. What a forcible motive is here presented us, for the increase of our confidence ! The number, the greatness, the repetition of our offences, our manifold relapses, could never exhaust this treasury of mercy. O God of goodness ! who would refuse to love Thee after

witnessing so many proofs of Thy love for us; and the desire Thou hast to save us.

II. POINT.

The effects produced by the Sacrament of Penance in well-disposed hearts.

God, Whose mercy surpasses all His works, and Who desires nothing less than the sanctification of the just, and the conversion of sinners, has not decreed that the effects of the Sacrament of Penance should be limited to the remission of sins; He has attached to it, for the spiritual advantage of those who approach it with faith and contrition, most abundant graces, proper for their advance in the practice of every virtue. It is in the sacred tribunal of Penance that fervent souls acquire a knowledge of themselves, and the courage necessary for the overcoming of their evil inclinations. It is there that they learn to detest more and more, even the least faults; and to punish themselves when they find they have fallen into such: they there learn also to preserve a pure conscience; and how to merit, by humble prayer and constant vigilance, necessary help for triumphing over temptation. Never permit us, O God, to neglect this easy and efficacious means of perfection; do not suffer us to displease Thee by keeping any stain of sin upon our souls. Make us to appreciate as we ought, the graces attached to the Sacrament of Penance; to dispose ourselves to receive it worthily, and to gather therefrom fruits of salvation.

COLLOQUY.

Lord Jesus, how can I manifest my gratitude for all the benefits bestowed on me, as a consequence of the power

Thou hast bequeathed to Thy Church, of purifying me from the stain of sin, and enriching me with Thy best gifts. Deign to dispel the darkness which hides from me the knowledge of myself; and causes my soul to be often troubled. Touched with a sense of Thy great goodness, may I do my utmost to present myself at the tribunal of Thy mercy, full of compunction and of love; that I may be more and more cleansed from my iniquities.

RESOLUTION.

To be always faithful to the duty of rightly preparing myself for Confession.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

O God, wash me yet more from my iniquities, and cleanse me from my sin.

PRAYER.

Our Father, and Hail Mary.

Third Week after Easter.—Friday.

Jesus appears the second time to His Apostles—Thomas being present.

JESUS spoke to Thomas, who answered and said to Him : My Lord and My God.—S. JOHN XX.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us imagine the shame and fear, and then the wonder and joy which must have been depicted on the face of

Saint Thomas, as he heard the words Jesus addressed to him.

II. PRELUDE.

O Lord, grant that we may love Thee all the more ardently, as we understand Thy goodness and mercy, in our regard, better.

I. POINT.

My Lord and my God! was the cry of mingled faith and regret, uttered by Saint Thomas.

My Lord and my God! exclaimed this Disciple, as soon as he recognised his Master, Whose condescending goodness had triumphed over the obstinacy of Thomas. *My Lord and my God!* was his cry of faith; thereby clearly confessing that Jesus Christ was true God and true Man, that the divine nature was hidden under the outward appearance of our humanity. *My Lord and my God!* On the very point of losing his faith, Saint Thomas finds a place of security from this, the temptation which threatened to prove his ruin. He retires within the Sacred Wounds as a dove within the crevices of the rock; and there, in accents of penitence he confesses his fault—in acknowledging Jesus as his Master and his God. Let us enter with him *into the clefts of the Rock, and into the hollow places of the Wall*, and therein may the echo repeat our sighs, and our regrets, wherewith we bemoan the weakness of our faith, and our numberless infidelities. We too have cause to avow with shame, that we have very often obstinately clung to our own private judgment; and the uncertain evidence of our senses; forgetful of the truth that *faith is the evidence of things that appear not.*

II. POINT.

My Lord and my God! was also an exclamation of joy and of love, on the part of Saint Thomas.

This simple expression of deep feeling says more than the most eloquent words could have done. In the repeating of them we enter into the joy of the happy Disciple at having found again the Dear Master, Whom he had (as he feared) lost. Just before the Passion of our Lord, he had expressed his zeal, and his devotion in his Master's cause, by the persuasive words with which he addressed his fellow-disciples; who were fearful lest the Jews should stone Jesus, if He again appeared in Judea. *Let us also go*, he had said, *that we may die with Him.* Jesus does not forget our professions of love and faith, our acts of confidence in Him, of desire to suffer with Him; and though clouds of distrust and misunderstanding of God's purposes may arise, He will, in His own time, (remembering our past deeds of loyalty) give us opportunities of making amends for subsequent delinquencies. During the ten days that had elapsed since the Crucifixion, Thomas had been yielding to doubts and depression; but the touch of Jesus healed his soul, and restored to him the joy of being again numbered amongst His faithful servants. All his incredulity was at an end directly he had, in obedience to our Lord's desire, placed his hand within the open Side of his Redeemer. As we sympathise with him in his joy, let us make an act of love for Jesus as generous, as fervent as his own: *My Lord and my God!*

COLLOQUY.

Yes! my Divine Master, I find myself happy in my life of complete dependence on Thee. In consecrating my being

to Thy service—in engaging myself to be Thy servant—have I not made a choice for eternity? throughout the countless ages of which I shall rejoice in Thee, *My Lord and my God*. If ever tempted to incredulity on matters of faith, or to be discouraged after falling into some fault, let me remember the example of Saint Thomas; and the strengthening influence of Thy Words of mingled reproach, and affection. Shed this same influence on me, O Jesus.

RESOLUTION.

Often to repeat Saint Thomas's act of faith.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

My Lord and my God! within Thy Wounds hide me.

PRAYER.

Soul of Christ.

Third Week after Easter.—Saturday.

Jesus extols faith most highly.

Blessed are they that have not seen, and have believed.—
S. JOHN XX.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us look at our Lord standing amongst His Apostles; and listen to His declaration in favour of those who believe in Him, without having seen Him.

II. PRELUDE.

O Divine Saviour, deign to increase in us the virtue of Faith, whilst Thou dost make us to understand its excellence.

I. POINT.

How much faith pleases our Lord and glorifies Him.

It is faith which has overcome the world: its weapons have put down the revolts of corrupt nature, and it has thus extended the Kingdom of Jesus Christ in souls. It is the fundamental principle of that zeal which Apostles have displayed in their evangelical labours; of the noble-mindedness of Confessors and Martyrs; of the constancy of Virgins in the presence of cruel tyrants; of the courage that still—in these degenerate times—so large a number of the faithful oppose to the strong forces of human passion, and the widespread seductions of bad example. Are we not, each one of us, witnesses to the power of faith over hearts, if we are seeking to please our Lord? *for without faith it is impossible so to do.* God, by means of His gift of faith, renders Himself Master of our understandings and our wills, and thereby much glory accrues to Him. It is our duty to renew within us this virtue, to cultivate it steadily, and to strengthen in ourselves this consideration:—that the more lively our faith is, the more perfect will other virtues become in us. Let us cry out from the depths of our hearts, as did the Apostles when our Lord had once been giving them an instruction on charity: *Increase our faith!* If we have faith in its fulness, we shall also possess true love, *which is the bond of perfection*, in abundance.

II. POINT.

They are most happy who live by faith.

Blessed are they who have not seen, and have believed. Yes! most happy are they—they receive in this life the reward of their submissive, yet active belief; for it supplies to them a foretaste of celestial happiness, of which faith is capable of making them anticipate, in some degree, the unchangeableness and reality.—The knowledge it affords us of divine things, far surpasses in value all the science acquired by the wise and learned of this world. While it unfolds the beauty of the perfections of the Creator—His gifts—His benefits—His rewards, faith excites in us love for Him. While disengaging our affections from perishable objects, it elevates them to things invisible, and makes known to us the value of the prize of eternal life. When we submit to the holy law of God, faith assures us of its justice, and enforces the necessity of perseverance in well-doing. Do we habitually see things with the eye of faith? Are we daily participating in the happiness of those who live in the spirit of faith? By it, raised above the things of sense, are we hoping for those things *that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard?* and are we learning to love God above all, and our neighbour as ourselves, with a charity supernatural, disinterested, pure, solid, invariable? Faith encourages us in our difficulties. By the clear light of this divine torch may we not mount towards Heaven, and see our everlasting dwelling-place? by this means exciting in ourselves greater ardour in our endeavours to reach it. We shall do well to descend into hell by the same light; and contemplating the torments of the lost, avoid more carefully all that is contrary to a holy life.

COLLOQUY.

How can I sufficiently thank Thee, O Jesus, for having enlightened my soul with the divine light of faith! its clear

rays produce so sweet a radiance, that it forms the solace of my exile, the quiet happiness of my heart, and the joy of my life.—And if already, O Jesus, faith in Thy mysteries and in Thy promises renders me so happy, what will the actual contemplation of Thy glory be? the enjoyment of the riches of the eternal Kingdom? What will be the realisation of my joy, when faith shall have conducted me through this land of exile to the entrance of *the City that hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God?*

RESOLUTION.

Not to perform my actions by routine, nor through self-will; but to renew frequently in myself the spirit of faith, and so to act with purity of intention.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Blessed are they that have not seen, and have believed.

PRAYER.

Our Father, and Hail Mary.

Fourth Week after Easter.—Sunday.

Jesus warned His Disciples of His departure from this world.

It is expedient to you that I go: for if I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you: but if I go, I will send Him.—

S. JOHN XX.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent to ourselves how Jesus, even before His Death, prepared the Disciples for the pain of separating from Him, when He should go to His Father.

II. PRELUDE.

Prepare us, O Saviour, to receive the Holy Spirit, by teaching us too, how to free our hearts from all human attachments.

I. POINT.

Undue affection for things of sense, holy though these things may be, is an obstacle to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in our souls.

If I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you. We listen with surprise to these words of our Lord; and inquire why it was necessary that the Disciples should be deprived of their Divine Master, Whose Presence benefited them so much. Saint Bernard gives a reason which is most true, and yet, at first it increases our astonishment. “The grief of the Apostles at the departure of our Lord, surpassed the bounds of calm restraint; there was too much natural affection in their attachment for Him;” and unless they made a generous sacrifice of their desire to retain Him (contrary to the Will of the Heavenly Father) on earth, they would not be deemed to be fitting recipients of the Holy Spirit. We may ask: Can there be anything more perfectly right than ardently to love so good a Master, and to grieve bitterly over His absence? No! nothing can be more holy than a real love for Jesus Christ; but the love the Disciples bore towards Him was not yet sufficiently spiritualised. They looked

upon Him as a Leader Who would procure them temporal advantages, but they did not, at that time, love Him with that supernatural love which constitutes true charity. Therefore it was He said to them: *If I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you* : I desire that you should no longer love Me in so imperfect a manner, and if I remain always with you, you will never learn to love Me aright. When, through sorrow, it has been refined from that which is purely natural, then—and not until then will you be fitted to receive the Holy Spirit.—If our Lord could thus speak with regard to the ill effects of the too earthly affection of the Disciples for Himself, what can we suppose will be the result of our attachment to creatures ? This consideration should make us see more clearly the prejudice to our souls, which is caused by any ill-regulated affection, be it ever so little. It deprives us of peace, it prevents our being intimately united to God ; because we are, in fact, robbing Him of just that amount of affection, which we unjustly bestow on created objects.

II. POINT.

Why Jesus willed to ascend into Heaven before sending the Paraclete.

The many reasons why the Three Persons of the Undivided Trinity held that wonderful Council which had recalled Jesus to His Throne in Heaven, and caused the Descent of the Holy Ghost to take place only ten days afterwards, are hidden in the mysterious depths of divine Wisdom. But this we know, that the Son of God, desiring to establish a new and marvellous intercourse between earth and Heaven, went up thither in the garb of Humanity, as Man to send back to men the best gifts of His Kingdom ; and

to institute a community of goods between the inhabitants of the earthly and the inhabitants of the celestial Jerusalem. We know that in order to advance His Church, He ordained that those who had followed Him on earth should not yet follow Him into glory: it was here that they were to learn those things which it is the special office of the Third Person of the Holy Trinity to teach. He was to bring back to their minds the practical lessons on charity, meekness, obedience, humility, and other virtues inculcated by Jesus; and to instruct them in the *many things which He had yet to say to them*, but which they could not bear, until they had been *endued with power from on high*. Our Lord willed also that the Apostles should feel the need of the Spirit of God,—that they should ask for His Coming, by means of Whom they might be *taught all truth*,—that they might experience what it was to be *orphans and desolate* for a little while; and might thus more truly appreciate the fulfilment of their Master's promise that He would not leave them in that forsaken condition. He would also show us that we should pray for the accomplishment of God's promises: it would be presumption to take it for granted that we shall be counted worthy to partake of expected favours, unless we ask, that we may receive—and seek, that we may find. Jesus seems to leave us also, from time to time; it is in order to spiritualise our love for Himself.

COLLOQUY.

O my God, I know that I was not made for this life only, nor to waste my affections on created things. My destiny here is to follow in Thy Son's Footsteps across the desert-land of this world; and after being enlightened by Thy Holy Spirit, and *by Him taught all truth*, the full realisation of its dignity and of its divinity awaits me hereafter. Grant

that, anticipating the honour to which Thou wilt deign to raise me, the happiness with which I shall be crowned, I may now strive to love Thee with a pure love; and correspond faithfully to the attractions of Thy grace.

RESOLUTION.

To banish that which is merely human from my affections, that my love for God may become more perfect.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee.

PRAYER.

Our Father, and Hail Mary.

Fourth Week after Easter.—Monday.

Jesus appears to some of the Disciples at the Sea of Tiberias.

Some of the Disciples went forth, and entered into the ship: and that night they caught nothing: But when the morning was come, JESUS stood on the shore: yet the Disciples knew not that it was JESUS. He saith to them: Cast the net on the right side of the ship: they cast it, therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.—S. JOHN XXI.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent to ourselves the ineffectual labour of the

Disciples during the whole night ; and then the arrival of Jesus on the shore, Who procured for them an abundant supply.

II. PRELUDE.

Divine Saviour, teach us to be obedient to Thy commands, and thus to obtain Thy benediction on our endeavours.

I. POINT.

Without Jesus all is darkness, trouble, and labour in vain.

The Disciples that night caught nothing. The useless toil of the Apostles in the absence of their Master, is strikingly figurative of the condition of those that are separated from Jesus ; who withdraw themselves from the yoke of obedience, to follow their own judgment and their own will ; those who, in their actions—their employments—instead of purposing only to promote the glory of God, seek themselves and their own interests. How unhappy are such souls ! For them all is in a state of obscurity. They are agitated, and torment themselves greatly. The darkness which blinds them, deprives them of the Presence of Jesus, without Whom we can do nothing. The lives of such are passed in toil and suffering, and no beneficial results arise from all this ; since it is Jesus only Who can bestow a blessing on, and give success to their labours—and they are not acting under His direction. For God they are not working ; in vain they look for true happiness out of Him, for it is inseparable from Himself. Never permit, Good Jesus, that we who belong to Thee by so many ties, may ever sever the holy bonds which unite us to Thyself ; but, on the contrary, grant that we may perseveringly continue in great purity of heart, and act in all the simplicity of obedience.

II. POINT.

When we are with Jesus we find light, sweetness, and every spiritual advantage.

After having pondered over the unhappiness of a soul, living in a state of separation from Jesus, let us now consider a contrary case—the happiness of those who live habitually in His Presence. They are in the enjoyment of illuminating graces; not only do they know and feel the consoling verities of the Faith, but the Holy Spirit communicates Himself to their soul, and discovers to it the admirable perfections of God; instructs it in His purposes, and inclines it to follow in the sure pathway of perfection. To all this is added a celestial sweetness, which renders every duty agreeable; and which pervades the greatest afflictions even, when they arise.—Loving God only, and being tenderly loved by Him—then the happiness of His true children is complete! And the effects of these precious spiritual advantages are by no means confined to this present life; the common actions of every day acquire for them an infinite recompense; because, being done in accordance with the inspirations of Jesus Christ, in compliance with His communicated desires, they are united to His actions, and are rendered worthy to increase the glory of the Heavenly Father. Are we quick to perceive that it is Jesus Who is standing there, so near to us? directly He speaks are we ready to act in faith and obedience, although the command seems difficult? unlikely—judging from our own experience—to have a favourable result? Jesus often may surprise us by saying: *Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and you shall find*: but let us do so unquestioningly.

COLLOQUY.

O my Jesus, without Thee I can do nothing. Make Thy Presence known to me. I am still on the troubled sea of this life : do Thou control my intentions, my will, my actions ; rule Thou over all my powers of mind and body. As Thou didst direct the Apostles' labour, so do Thou direct my work, that it may issue in the furtherance of Thy wise designs ; and be crowned with that success which obedience secures, often contrary to all human expectation. Teach me, O Good Master, how to glorify Thee by my submission to Thy Will, to-day—and every day.

RESOLUTION.

To live in constant dependence on—expectation of—a controlling word or glance from Jesus.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Without Me, you can do nothing.

PRAYER.

Take, O Lord, and receive.

Fourth Week after Easter.—Tuesday.**The Apostles recognise their Master.**

That Disciple whom JESUS loved, said to Peter : It is the Lord.—S. JOHN XXI.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent to ourselves Jesus on the sea-shore, speaking to the Disciples who were fishing :—at first they did not know it was He.

II. PRELUDE.

Give us, O Blessed Saviour, grace to recognise Thee at all times and in all places ; and to point Thee out to others as their Divine Lord.

I. POINT.

Jesus makes Himself known to the Disciple whom He loved ; and through him to all his companions.

The Apostles, busied with their fishing, were not expecting to see Jesus : He even spoke to them, and they failed to recognise Him, until Saint John exclaimed : *It is the Lord*. There were two reasons why it was his privilege to discover that it was their Master Who was before them—that Master's peculiar love for him, and that Disciple's great purity of heart. If we would love Jesus, let us merit to be greatly loved by Him : and to be thus loved, let us cherish purity and charity. These two virtues are like the eyes of the soul : God discovers to those who possess these virtues, His secrets ; so that the beauty of true excellence, the attractions of divine love—which would be lost upon a soul tarnished by vice, or absorbed in the cares and vanities of this life—form the delight of a pure and loving heart. "It is certain," says Saint Francis de Sales, "that chastity may be lost in as many ways, as there are occasions of danger in ourselves, by which this virtue may be weakened or wounded, or entirely destroyed." To preserve the beauty, the purity of the soul, the dazzling whiteness of the lily of chastity—the angelic

virtue—the same Saint gives us this wise counsel : “ Form ties of friendship only with reserved, and virtuous persons : employ yourselves often with the reading of the Holy Scriptures, for the word of God is pure, and renders those pure who delight in it.” We must also keep very near to Jesus Crucified : spiritually—by means of meditation ; actually—by means of Holy Communion. Thus uniting ourselves to the Immaculate Lamb of God, our heart, mind, and senses will by degrees become entirely purified, and we shall thus make ourselves worthy of the privilege granted to the beloved, the virgin Disciple,—that of causing Jesus to be known, loved, and served by others ; for a pure heart, a heart penetrated with tender charity, possesses a wondrous power, which makes itself felt whenever there is an opportunity of speaking of Jesus—of winning hearts for Him.

II. POINT.

By what signs Saint John recognised Jesus.

The miracle of the draught of fishes, of which Jesus had just been the Author, awoke the attention, perhaps the surmises, of the other Disciples ; but it was Saint John who, enlightened by an especial illumination, cried out : *It is the Lord.* He recognised Him not only by His Features, and the sound of His Voice, but by a certain interior impression he was conscious of, within his own heart ; a sentiment of love which was re-echoed there, as the words of Jesus fell upon his ear. Had he not leaned upon His Breast, and been favoured with His especial regard ?—What wonder then that love in him was ever on her watch-tower, to catch the first glimpse of the Beloved ? The Celestial Bridegroom makes Himself known to pure and innocent souls by the idea

He silently conveys to them of the infinite beauty of His Divinity, and the lovely attractiveness of His Humanity :—by these they readily recognise Him. His words are so sweet, and so powerful, that saints accustomed to converse familiarly with Him are at once aware of His approach,—and further, by an effect of His liberality, He so overwhelms them with graces that they cannot fail to know Who their Benefactor is :—they cease not to bless Him, and often say in a rapture of holy joy : *It is the Lord !* Who animates me, Who encourages me :—*It is the Lord !* Who enlightens me, causes me to rejoice, renders me happy !—Is it thus we know Jesus ?

COLLOQUY.

O my Saviour ! how often hast Thou come to visit me, and I have not recognised Thee ; because my spiritual vision has been clouded over by the passions which were present, to darken and to agitate my soul. O Sovereign Beauty ! when shall I gaze upon Thee, and rejoice as the Saints have done in the assurance that it is Thou—the Lord—Whom they beheld with the eye of faith ; and Whose Voice they heard. I beseech Thee to enlighten my blindness, and render me worthy to make Thee known to others.

RESOLUTION.

Carefully to purify my heart, and to keep it free from every affection which may soil it, ever so little.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

The Disciple whom Jesus loved, said to Peter : It is the Lord.

PRAYER.

Soul of Christ.

Fourth Week after Easter.—Wednesday.

Saint Peter casts himself into the sea to go to Jesus.

Simon Peter, when he heard from Saint John that it was the Lord, girt his coat about him, and cast himself into the sea.—S. JOHN XXI.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent to ourselves Saint Peter, as he swam to the shore from his fishing-boat, to reach his Master.

II. PRELUDE.

Grant, O God, that our love for Thee may not consist in mere sentiment only, but that it produce in us deeds of holy zeal.

I. POINT.

Characteristics of divine love.

The beloved Disciple has often been pointed out as a model for such as are drawn to lead a contemplative life, whose love should be calm, always watchful, and quick to recognise the Presence of the Lord ; as was the love of Saint John, when he was the first to discover that it was Jesus Who was standing on the shore. Saint Peter being the model of evangelical labourers, whose love is to be proved by energy and activity, let us carefully consider this Apostle's actions when he heard the announcement made by Saint John. Out of a deep sense of respect and reverence, he clothed himself before approaching our Lord ; this was his first thought : so ought we to be clothed with virtue in order to please Him, and to prepare our souls to draw near

to Him. It will ensure our success in God's Sight if we gird ourselves with the garment of a good intention, as we cast ourselves in the midst of our undertakings : this good intention should be interwoven with charity, gentleness, and patience—which will bear us onwards towards Him we love : and with humility, mortification, and purity—which will merit for us His gracious smile of recognition and approval. O Jesus ! make our love for Thee both reverent and active. Inspire us with an ardent desire that our souls may be adorned with every virtue : never may we presume to approach Thee devoid of the ornaments in which Thou takest delight.

II. POINT.

True love is not stayed in its course by any obstacle.

Saint Peter, having put on his garment, sprang into the sea, that he might go to his Master as quickly as possible. He feared neither danger nor trouble. The desire he had of reaching Him Whom he loved, caused him to overlook every difficulty. Such is true love—the love which glorifies Jesus. Such should, therefore, be that of all His disciples—such should be ours, proving its reality by our sparing ourselves in nothing : neither in labours, nor fatigues, nor humiliations, when it is a question of serving God and pleasing Him. It has been well said that “they who are fervent throw themselves into the midst of dangers, as Saint Peter did into the sea, exposing themselves to all sorts of trouble and suffering for love of Jesus : but those who are tepid and languid are fearful of being drowned in a rivulet”. Fervent love ventures to undertake acts of heroism, which are not of obligation ; but a feeble love fails in courage about doing even the easy things to which duty obliges. The slothful

say : *There is a lion without*, I fear to go forth, I will not run any risk of meeting with adversaries,—but to the fervent, love gives strength, and causes such to do great things for God ; fearing neither the lions without, nor any enemies within. Though naturally timorous, we shall be strong enough to vanquish them all, if we obtain from God the gift of fervour ; this will enable us to overcome all hindrances to our perfection : and following the example of Saint Peter, we shall learn how to conquer even habitual cowardice in the service of God. Passing—if needs be—through the waters of trial and difficulty, we should never forget that without continual efforts the swift current of nature will be too strong for us.—But looking towards Jesus, and using His grace and strength, we shall safely reach the shore.

COLLOQUY.

O Loving Saviour, I am entirely Thine ; my desire is to glorify Thee by an active and generous love. I would gladly learn how to sacrifice my comfort, my rest, my enjoyments, more completely. Impress the example afforded by Saint Peter's ready, active love on my memory ; and grant that, forgetful of myself, I may direct all my doings as in Thy Sight, and with the view of reaching the eternal Shore, where Thou art watching me—waiting for me.

RESOLUTION.

To promptly obey God's holy inspirations ; and to refuse nothing that He asks of me.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Peter, hearing that it was the Lord, cast himself into the sea.

PRAYER.

Soul of Christ.

Fourth Week after Easter.—Thursday.

Jesus invites the Disciples to take their repast.

JESUS cometh and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish in like manner.—S. JOHN XXI.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us imagine our Lord together with the Disciples, on the sea-shore ; and see the fish and bread miraculously prepared by His almighty power.

II. PRELUDE.

Adorable Lord Jesus, grant that while we appreciate more and more the effects of Thy bounty, we may learn how to render ourselves more worthy of them.

I. POINT.

The kind forethought of Jesus in providing a repast for the Disciples, after the labours of the night were over.

On leaving the ship, the Disciples *saw hot coals lying, and a fish laid thereon, and bread.* Here we learn that in this life, God our kind Father, provides miraculous nourishment for His children. He takes care to procure a spiritual refection for those who toil and labour for Him, He offers them the Bread of Angels ; He invites them to the feast.—Come, He says, come now and taste of the food prepared for you, and be satisfied.—And if we look a little way into the future—after the completion of the labours that zeal for the glory of God has caused us to undertake—after the

fatigues consequent upon our practice of the duties of our vocation shall be over—we shall find our Good Lord presenting Himself to us on the shores of the eternal Country, waiting to receive us with open Arms, and to invite us to join the banquet prepared through His royal munificence, whereat we shall taste the delights of the Kingdom of God. Oh ! how happy are we to belong to a Father, so liberal, so good to His children,—to be the spouses of so loving a Bridegroom. Though we may have to toil all through the night of this life—and apparently in vain very often—with such a prospect before us, how can our courage fail ? How can we complain of fatigue or suffering that will be followed by eternal rest, eternal bliss ?

II. POINT.

Our Saviour asks of the Apostles that their love correspond with His own.

Jesus saith to them : *Bring hither of the fishes that you have now caught.* By this He asks for our co-operation. He gives much, but He desires that our works correspond with the graces He bestows. At his Master's command, Saint Peter, full of fervour, drew the net containing the fishes to land ; doubtless for this, special strength was accorded to him—the chief Fisherman—who was henceforth *to catch men*, and draw them into the Church of God.—To bring the lesson home to ourselves. Jesus says again and again : *Bring of the fishes which you have caught* : unite the result of your labour to the result of my grace. Do they hear any comparison ? Bring the good works—the acquired virtues—the mortifications practised—the victories achieved—the souls gained for Me. Bring an account of the time, the talents, the advantages I have lent to you.—May we

indeed be able to bring them all to the Feet of our Master, at that day when we cannot fail to hear His most just request. The one endeavour of a life-time should be to amass merits for eternity, to be united to the merits of Him Who is preparing for us a place at the heavenly banquet.—The hours of the night pass wearily, perchance, but the endless day of Eternity is already beginning to dawn.

COLLOQUY.

O Jesus, I can picture the joy of Thy favoured Disciples, when in the morning they found Thee waiting for them, after their night of toil. May the thought of Thy Presence fill us with happiness ; and to win Thy approval and Thy recompense, may I use my best endeavours to lay up the treasures of love and good works, which Thou wilt permit me to unite to the infinite treasures of grace Thou dost now, and of glory Thou wilt hereafter, lavish on me, Thy most unworthy child. Provide for me, O Lord, the Bread of Life day by day: that Foretaste of the delights of the eternal Feast, to which Thou wilt, I trust, ere long bid me come.

RESOLUTION.

To glorify God by co-operating with His grace.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Jesus said : Come and dine.

PRAYER.

Our Father, and Hail Mary.

Fourth Week after Easter.—Friday.

Jesus asks Saint Peter if he loves Him.

When the Disciples had dined, JESUS saith to Simon Peter: Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me more than these?—
8. JOHN XXI.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent to ourselves the gentle kindness of Jesus in speaking to Saint Peter, and this Apostle's humility and self-restraint when making reparation for his past fault.

II. PRELUDE.

Good Master, give us grace to make amends for our faults by a generous love, which will necessarily cause us to work with zeal and prayerfulness for the salvation of souls.

I. POINT.

Peter made a threefold protestation of his love, in reparation for his triple denial.

Let us not grow weary of studying in the conduct of our Divine Lord, the sentiments of His Heart—the refinement of His love. He had entirely forgiven His repentant Disciple the threefold denial of Himself; but He perceived in him the desire to repair his unfaithfulness: He saw his heart oppressed with grief at the bitter remembrance of it, and in His wisdom He knew how best to relieve this sorrow—by causing him three times to repeat his protestation of love. Our Lord's manner of acting on this occasion cannot fail to draw forth our own love, as we consider His goodness

and mercy. Twice Saint Peter answered the inquiry of Jesus : *Lovest thou Me?* by a simple assurance; but the third time he was grieved : he remembered how his Master might justly place but little dependence on his affirmations; he therefore replied, deprecatingly : *Lord, Thou knowest all things : Thou knowest that I love Thee.* We see his carefulness to avoid presumption, through which he had before fallen : now humility saves him, and peace thereby is restored to his soul : it purifies his love, animates his penitence, and renders him worthy to receive the fresh favours Jesus is about to bestow on him. A fall thus repaired, is more advantageous to a soul, brings greater glory to God, than mere exterior fidelity, less humble and less productive of love and gratitude. It behoves us to obtain from our Lord grace to share in the sentiments of Saint Peter : and should we offend our Divine Master, then must we, without giving way to sadness and discouragement, throw ourselves with confidence on His mercy, and humbly declare that we, nevertheless, do love Him.

II. POINT.

Jesus points out to Saint Peter the way in which he can prove his love for Him.

Jesus saith to Simon Peter : Lovest thou Me more than these ? He saith to Him : Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee : Jesus saith to him : Feed My lambs. Our Lord in affording Saint Peter an opportunity of giving pleasure to Himself by an avowal of his love—and by this means reanimating his confidence—gives us this lesson of highest wisdom : if we offend others, or others give us cause of annoyance, that which it is most important to obtain is, not always the pardon and reparation of some fault on one side

or the other, but the re-establishment of mutual confidence. And the most effectual means for accomplishing this is to imitate Jesus; and with the same charity and delicacy of feeling He evinced, procure for the offender an opportunity of doing some service, or of giving some proof of attachment, as a sign that mutual trust has not been forfeited. Jesus did not say that He was convinced of the trustworthiness of His Apostle, on account of the reiteration of his assurance of affection; but He showed His appreciation of this by allotting to Saint Peter a work to do, for love of Himself: *Feed My lambs—Feed My sheep*. Jesus gave him His own work to go on with: He came on earth to save souls; His Vicar on earth is now confirmed in his office of carrying on the Saviour's Mission. Our Lord had not accepted the sacrifice, when Saint Peter had said: *I will lay down my life for Thee*; but now that he tacitly places himself at his Master's disposal by manifesting an evident mistrust of himself, and entire confidence in the discernment, the divine powers, the charity of Jesus, he is called to a life of labour, and grave responsibility; to make indeed a sacrifice, greater than that of laying down his life, before his glorious mission has been fulfilled. In his mission we all have our part. Has not each one of us said to our Lord: *Thou knowest that I love Thee*? Has He not replied: *Feed My lambs—Feed My sheep*: pray, work, sacrifice yourself; sustain, comfort, edify others—for My Sake.

COLLOQUY.

It is but too true that I have offended Thee, O Jesus, very much; but *Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that I love Thee*. Wilt Thou trust me, and give me daily work to do for Thee amongst the poor, the ignorant, the faint-hearted? May my prayers and sufferings on behalf of

sinner be acceptable in Thy Sight. Since Thou hast pardoned me, oh ! do Thou with me as Thou didst with Thy repentant Disciple, and give me opportunities of making amends for my faults—my past infidelities,—by working in union with Saint Peter—with Thyself.

RESOLUTION.

I will let no opportunity escape me of leading souls to God, in the way indicated by my vocation.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Lord, Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that I love Thee.

PRAYER.

Take, O Lord, and receive.

Fourth Week after Easter.—Saturday.

Jesus reprehends the curiosity of Saint Peter, and bids him to follow Him.

So I will have him to remain till I come, what is it to Thee? Follow thou Me.—S. JOHN XXII.

I. PREDUDE.

Let us observe with what gentleness Jesus bears with the imperfections of His Disciples. He calls attention to them, indeed, but it is that they may see them, and correct them.

II. PRELUDE.

Grant, O Lord, that profiting by this divine lesson, we may be so diligently occupied in putting our own spiritual affairs in order, that we may not be uselessly occupied with the concerns of others.

I. POINT.

In order to make progress in the spiritual life, we must avoid all perturbing thoughts, and censoriousness.

So I will that he remain till I come, what is it to thee : that is to say : why this curiosity ? this preoccupation ? *Follow thou Me.* One thing is needful for you ; endeavour to follow Me faithfully, to execute My purposes in your regard ; and do not—yielding to idle curiosity—interferingly question My manner of dealing with others. How desirable it is that we all, without exception, should take this reprimand thoroughly into consideration ; for are there not many, pious persons even, who are so occupied with all that concerns others, that they cannot give an undivided attention to God, and that which effects their own eternal interests.—They sadly neglect their own spiritual advancement, they do not get rid of their faults, nor acquire fresh virtues,—but they are very ready to censure their neighbour's shortcomings. And yet to overlook these is a fundamental principle in the law of Christian charity ; while not to spare ourselves with regard to our imperfections, is the first step in interior mortification. Do we not reverse this order ? by criticising others, and exonerating ourselves from blame. Not to censure, not to depreciate, to avoid rash judgment and envious curiosity, is the fulfilling of a difficult precept, which demands vigorous self-combat. But in the reply Jesus made to Saint Peter's needless inquiry as to the future

destiny of another Disciple, we plainly see the lesson He would have it convey to us. Put aside inquisitiveness, and do not seek to fill your mind with that which does not concern you. *What is this, or that to thee?* You will not have to answer for others, but forget not you must give an account of yourself. We shall do well to receive this salutary warning from our Divine Lord with thankfulness ; and to profit by it, by henceforward consecrating our zeal and vigilance to our own advancement in virtue.

II. POINT.

To make progress in the spiritual life, we ought to attach greater importance to the promoting of our own perfection, than to anything else.

So I will have him to remain till I come, what is it to thee? Follow thou Me. By these words our Lord teaches us not only to avoid any yielding to curiosity which may be an obstacle to spiritual progress, but also that we must work at our own perfection, by imitating Him—by going after Him in the path He trod when on earth—by daily accomplishing His Will. *Follow thou Me* in My hidden life, having a mind unoccupied with exterior things,—free from all craving after useless knowledge,—unaffected by passing events,—engrossed only with the blending of thy interests with Mine. In order barely to avoid sin—just to observe the commandments—Divine Wisdom declares that interior recollection, and vigilance are of absolute necessity : how then is it possible to aspire to a more perfect life, if the various injunctions, implied in the Good Master's words : *Follow thou Me*, be disregarded? And they are in fact not disregarded by those whose one desire, and aim, and object, it is to attain to perfection : longing after God only, they give no heed to

ought besides, save in cases of strict necessity or charity : watchful over themselves, they repress all that might displease their Dear Lord, and any rising of self-love, impatience, aversion, or sensuality, is quickly subdued by an act of one of the contrary virtues. If we thus act, we shall indubitably acquire great sanctity—a true union with God. And is not this our wish ?

COLLOQUY.

I understand better, O Divine Master, how it is that I have made so little progress in holiness. Occupying myself too much with all those things that strike the senses, I have too much neglected the care of my spiritual life, and the growth of Thy grace, and have rendered it sterile. Pardon, O Jesus, the bad use I have made of the precious gift of time, by spending it in curiously inquiring into matters which concern not my own salvation—which have nothing to do with my eternity. By Thy grace I will endeavour to gain a true spirit of recollection ; keeping clear of all else, except the plain duties with which Thou hast charged me. Help me to effect this, so necessary, reform in my life.

RESOLUTION.

To turn my thoughts from things which do not regard me, that I may have more time to give to the affairs of my own soul.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

What is that to thee ? Follow thou Me.

PRAYER.

Take, O Lord, and receive.

Fifth Week after Easter.—Sunday.**The necessity of Prayer.**

JESUS said to His Disciples : Amen, Amen, I say to you, if you ask the Father anything in My Name, He will give it to you. Ask and you shall receive.—S. JOHN XXVI.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us take our places amongst the Disciples as they surround the Divine Master, and receive with respect and gratitude the instruction He is giving for the spiritual benefit of us all.

II. PRELUDE.

Grant to us, O God, the spirit of prayer, which draws down upon those who possess it, so many graces.

I. POINT.

Prayer is necessary at all times.

Our Blessed Saviour, being about to leave His beloved children, left to them this legacy : the assurance that prayer would prove an excellent means of providing for all their wants during His absence from them : *Ask, and you shall receive: that your joy may be full.* Prayer is then necessary. Firstly : to avoid the evils which might happen to us : every day of our lives we meet with occasions of sin, from which divine grace alone can deliver us; for however determined we may be to live apart from the world—its spirit—its usages, we find the love of all this within our own hearts,

or at least striving to make its home there. Secondly: prayer is necessary for us to obtain, at every moment, light and strength; so that we may accomplish, with fervour, all the obligations of our state in life: our Lord recommends us to pray instantly, in imitation of that poor widow who by her importunity, obliged the unjust judge to do justice in her case. Thirdly, prayer is necessary in order to do each action well. Man is absolutely incapable of working out his own salvation alone—by himself; God has willed that he should gain each step in sanctity, by the help of His grace. In the ordinary course of His providence, this help is only given to such as ask for it. From this we see that without prayer we cannot be saved. It is true that early graces, and first holy impressions, may be received without our co-operation; such as a call to the true faith, or to repentance (as Saint Augustine remarks), since God sometimes grants these to those who do not pray; but it is certain that other graces, and above all, the gift of perseverance are granted only to those who seek them in prayer. We are like mendicants, and can only expect to have those graces which God bestows on us as alms. His promise is, however, unfailing: *Ask, and you shall receive.*

II. POINT.

The power of that prayer which is offered in the Name of Jesus.

If there be a season when prayer should be practised in an unusual degree, it is certainly now, when our Lord is about to ascend, and become *our Advocate with the Father*; and we are, according to His desire, to join with the Disciples in preparing to receive the Holy Ghost. To whom will the Paraclete come, if not to those who begin

now to prepare for His visit, and who beg that He may descend into their souls with His gifts and fruits? Before our Lord's departure from the world, let us listen to His words of command, and then of encouragement. *Ask—ask.* What more simple? We have a desire in our hearts—ask for its accomplishment: we have a longing so intense, that we feel if it were granted, our cup of happiness would be filled to overflowing—*ask, and you shall receive, and why? that your joy may be full: Whatsoever you shall ask the Father in My Name that will I do: and, if you shall ask Me anything in My Name, that also will I do. And I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Paraclete.* Why have we so little faith about the power of prayer? is it not true that it moves the Will of God? can it be so very difficult to believe the words of Him Who is Truth itself?—Are we too proud to ask for what we want? to place our petitions in the Hands of Jesus, and ask Him to bear them up to Heaven with Him, and to send back by the Blessed Spirit a favourable reply—a grace, a virtue, a blessing, spiritual attainments? Saints have the courage to ask for a memento of His Cross and Passion—the dearest token of His love. Is this going too far, for our weak faith and little love?

COLLOQUY.

Divine Saviour, Thy goodness inclines Thee to place at my disposal Thy riches and Thy graces, and Thou dost recommend me simply to ask for them in Thy Name. I bless and praise Thee with all my heart; and I pray for grace to make good use of this permission, this means of salvation and sanctification. May I be united to Thee by the golden links of perpetual prayer; make me to understand more clearly my many needs, so that I may depend

daily—hourly—for my spiritual and temporal supplies, on the alms I receive from Heaven.

RESOLUTION.

To pray more uninterruptedly—not only with my lips, but by my actions.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Ask, and you shall receive, that your joy may be full.

PRAYER.

Our Father, and Hail Mary.

Fifty Week after Easter.—Monday.

Jesus appears to all the Apostles.

And the eleven Disciples went into Galilee, unto the mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And JESUS coming, spoke to them, saying: All power is given Me in Heaven and in earth.—S. MATT. XXVIII.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent to ourselves this august assembly, presided over by the Divine Master: He confirms the Apostles in the Faith, while instructing them regarding the power He has received from His Father.

II. PRELUDE.

O Jesus, grant that as we meditate on Thine infinite

power, our mind, our heart, our whole being may be submitted to it.

I. POINT.

The sovereign power of Jesus constitutes His glory.

The power of earthly kings is essentially limited : they can indeed exercise authority over men ; but nature, with her many forces, is certainly not obedient even to a royal mandate. Where is the monarch who has command over the elements ? over diseases ? over death ? who has power in Heaven and in earth ? Of Jesus only, our Lord—the True Son of God, can it be said : *that both wind and sea obey Him*, and that He is the Sovereign Lord of the universe. He alone is great, He is the King of kings. We adore the sovereignty of the power of the Almighty Ruler, Who having promulgated his laws, and established His empire over hearts, returned from the earth to the Throne of His glory, thence to reign eternally. We cannot but admire the extent of this power ; we even rejoice on account of it, but do we place ourselves entirely under its sway ? Is our whole being willingly subject to it ? For we must remember that although all power has been given to Jesus in Heaven and in earth, there is, ordinarily, neither force nor constraint in His exercise of it ; He wills to reign over His creatures, but the submission must be voluntary. Surely with all our heart, we exclaim : O Good Lord ! we are only too thankful to be able to say we belong to Thee ; reign absolutely over us, we abandon ourselves wholly to Thy governance.

II. POINT.

The sovereign power of Jesus constitutes our happiness.

All power is given to Me in Heaven and in earth : Going

therefore teach ye all nations. We see the consequences of this sovereign power—how universally exercised it was to be—the correlativeness of the Heavenly King's glory and our happiness. He did not say: Go in the strength of My power and avenge My Death—go and destroy those who crucified Me—exterminate my enemies—those guilty ones, who, instead of profiting by My Sacrifice on the Cross, will persist in outraging God Himself, and treading under foot the Blood which I have shed for them. But no! the All-powerful, and All-merciful Saviour speaks quite differently from this. In virtue of my power, He says, go forth to labour for the salvation of all men, teach them the way to Heaven, withdraw men from the bondage of Satan, forgive and remit their sins; spread abroad My graces in abundance, for of them I make you the dispensers:—this undertaking is above your own strength, but fear nothing. *All power is given to Me in Heaven and in earth: and I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.* Oh! how worthy of admiration is the Omnipotence of Jesus! how universally beneficial! Are we sufficiently desirous that it may be exercised in all its fulness over ourselves?—Do we admit no rival power, to reign in our hearts?

COLLOQUY.

My Lord, All-powerful, and All-gracious, I rejoice greatly at the extension of Thy empire over the whole world. Be Thou ever glorified by all Thy creatures, and may all mankind acknowledge Thy power, and submit to it gladly. As Thou dost desire to exercise it over all our hearts, I offer Thee mine; and place myself entirely under the dominion of Thy influence, so that it may act not only upon my heart, but also upon my soul, my mind, my whole being.

RESOLUTION.

To see God in the government of the universe ; to glorify Him in the exercise of His omnipotence, by acting solely under His divine sway.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

All power is given to Me in Heaven and in earth.

PRAYER.

Our Father, and Hail Mary.

Fifth Week after Easter.—Tuesday.

Jesus sends out His Disciples to make the conquest of souls.

Going therefore, teach ye all nations : baptising them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost : Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I command you.—S. MATT. XXVIII.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us imagine we hear Jesus speaking to His Disciples with divine authority ; and demonstrating to them, in the command given, the sovereignty of His power.

II. PRELUDE.

Divine Jesus, make our faith living and practical ; so that we may advance Thy glory in our intercourse with our neighbour.

I. POINT.

Jesus, before His Ascension, points out certain means by which we shall reach Heaven also.

These means are Holy Baptism, and Faith in the truths contained in the Holy Gospel. *He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved : but he that believeth not shall be condemned.* Our Divine Saviour had accomplished all the mysteries of His Life. He was on the point of returning to His glorious Home ; but first He would indicate what measures must be taken, in order that we fail not to follow Him there. In the regenerating waters of Baptism our souls have been purified from original sin, and we have been consecrated to the Adorable Trinity, and made inheritors of the Kingdom of the Eternal God. By Baptism the precious gift of Faith has been deposited in our hearts ; but the graces of this Sacrament and the gift of faith will bring forth no fruit in us, if we do not live in that condition of sanctity, which our vocation, as Christians, demands. Let us look into our soul, so solemnly dedicated to God, and see if its powers are never applied to profane uses ; if our heart, that has been consecrated to God, has God and Him alone, for the Object of its affections. Is the doctrine of the Gospel our rule of life ? When it is a question of suffering contempt, of stifling some interior revolt, of practising some act of mortification, do we say to ourselves : Faith in the maxims of the holy Gospel tells me what to do under this or that circumstance—this is a moment which will affect the degree of my eternal happiness. We have been baptised ; therefore we may not lament the ills we have to endure—our trials and afflictions—the mortifications which may lower us in the eyes of the world ; but as our Lord Jesus Christ did, we should receive them as coming to us in accordance with the designs

of God ; and to further the accomplishment of His wise purposes of love towards us.

II. POINT.

While sanctifying ourselves, we should labour for the sanctification of our neighbour.

Going therefore, teach ye all nations. Such is the mission of the Apostles and of their successors. The sphere of our own mission is more limited : generally speaking, it does not extend beyond our parish, our family, our schools, our household, our dependents ; but if we even restrict it to personal influence, still we have plenty to do, and our zeal should not flag because the field of our labour appears narrow. *He who causeth a sinner to be converted . . . shall save his soul from death.* We do not really understand the value of the soul, or there would be nothing we would not do to save one. Saint Catherine of Sienna, says :—“If we could see the beauty of a soul, we should be glad to die a hundred times a day, to ensure its salvation.” And what would it be, if we could really see the access of glory procured to Jesus Christ thereby !—This has been the motive which has induced so many apostolic men to go to the furthest ends of the earth, to win souls for their Divine Master. By our prayers or our alms we can even accompany them, while at the same time at home we may be finding opportunities to sacrifice our ease, our rest, our life perhaps, in obeying the injunction of our Ascending Lord : *Going*—going through your little round of daily duties—going out of the narrow limits of selfishness—going on in the path of perfection—*teach ye.*

COLLOQUY.

It was indeed a noble function with which the Apostles

were charged, to carry Thy Name, O Jesus, before the Gentiles, and throughout all the world ; and to cause It to be adored by all nations ! If Thou dost not call me to any such vast undertaking, I may, by fervently praying for the advancement of Thy reign, participate nevertheless, in their happy privilege. *Thy Kingdom come.* Increase in me zeal for Thy glory ; so that I may, while striving to sanctify my own soul, teach others by my words—by my example—by proofs of the reality of my love and gratitude for Thee.

RESOLUTION.

To learn well the practice of virtue myself, and then teach others.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Going therefore, teach ye all nations : baptising them.

PRAYER.

O Jesus, living in Mary.

Fifth Week after Easter.—Wednesday.

The Promise of Jesus to His Church.

Behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.—S. MATT. XXVIII.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent to ourselves the Divine Master encircled by His Apostles. He consoles them in the moment of departure, by promising never to forsake them.

II. PRELUDE.

Adorable Saviour, Who dost perfect the work of redemption, by remaining for ever in Thy Holy Church, and directing her by Thy Divine Spirit, make us worthy of the means of salvation Thou hast procured.

I. POINT.

Jesus Christ is with His Church,—with each one of His elect.

Jesus has *not left us orphans* : this tender Father has not forsaken His children ;—knowing our weakness, He knew also that it was necessary to remain with us, to lead us in the sure and safe way of holiness, to enlighten us in the hour of darkness, to strengthen us by His grace, and to inspire us with courage necessary to vanquish our rebellious nature. He makes us aware of His presence of special Protection—that presence so vividly felt by Saint Felix, who, when pursued by his persecutors, remarked that : “ In the presence of Jesus Christ, a spider’s web is as strong as a wall”. And then there is His presence of perpetual Love—which makes Heaven of earth. The Church, in possessing the Very and Corporeal Presence of Jesus in the Divine Eucharist, may exclaim, with even greater reason than Moses : *Neither is there any nation so great, that hath gods so nigh them, as our God is present to all our petitions.* The Corporeal and Sensible Presence of Jesus Christ when He was on earth visibly, was an inestimable grace. To see God conversing with men, and living amongst them in great familiarity—to behold His miracles—to hear His holy instructions—to witness in His holy Humanity the manifestation of His supreme majesty, His gentleness, His

goodness, His wisdom—this was a privilege—granted in favour of mankind, of which the Angels might have been envious, had they been capable of envy. But does Jesus not still speak to us from the Tabernacle, conversing familiarly with us when we gather round Him there? may we not still witness miracles of grace, due to the personal influence of Him Who dwells upon our Altars, and there shows forth His virtues and perfections? As we hear the last words He spoke on earth sounding in our ears to-day, can we not add our testimony to their verity? *Behold I am with you all days.*

II. POINT.

It is for us to claim, by our fidelity to Him, the fulfilment of the last promise made by Jesus before His Ascension.

I am with you: to be your strength and your joy. *I am with you*: so that nothing may be wanting to you—nothing may trouble you—nothing may harm you—nothing may resist you. *I am with you*, so that you may obtain from the Father all you desire. A soul to whom Jesus says: *I am with you*, and who cherishes the companionship of her Heavenly Spouse, is far beyond the reach of anxiety; and there is called into existence a mutual confidence, which is incomparable—perfect. It is the continual practice of holy recollection—and meditation on divine things, which can alone stay our natural inconstancy; and if firmly united to Jesus Christ, the soul gains such a command over herself, that she is proof against temptations of every kind. Jesus has promised to be with us, in whatever century, in whatever country, in whatever position of life our lot may be cast: and His promises vary not with varying circumstances. But it is for each one of us to ask if our instability does not tend to alienate us from Him? if

our inconstancy of heart does not incline us to seek for earthly objects of affection, to the lessening of the sense of His continual Presence? He will never, never abandon us ; let us not abandon Him.

COLLOQUY.

How full of comfort are the last word Thou didst speak on earth, O Son of Mary! *Whom having not yet seen, I love;* and desire nothing so much as to abide continually in the presence of Thy Divine Protection—in the presence of Thy Eucharistic Love. I beseech Thee to pour down Thy Holy Spirit into my heart, and to make me more and more worthy to take the place Thou hast prepared for me in Heaven, near Thyself. Oh ! when will the day come that I shall enter into the joy of Thy visible Presence ! What will the realisation of that joy be, if seeing Thee by faith, Who art now invisible, forms the charm, the happiness of my life here below !

RESOLUTION.

To remember that Jesus will keep His promise ; and to ask myself often how I am keeping mine.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Behold ! I am with you all days.

PRAYER.

Soul of Christ.

Feast of the Ascension.

The Triumph of Jesus Christ in glory.

The Lord JESUS, after He had spoken to them, was taken up into Heaven, and sitteth on the Right Hand of God.—
S. MATT. XVI.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us join ourselves to the company of the Apostles on Mount Olivet, and contemplate the King of Glory ascending unto Heaven.

II. PRELUDE.

O Well-Beloved of our souls ! grant that we may, through our ardent desire, and with all the affections of our heart, follow Thee in Thy Ascension.

I. POINT.

Jesus leaves this earth.

We see the Apostles, following their Master for the last time, up the mountain-side. They knew that the hour of parting was at hand, when the words of the message He had sent them, forty days before, were to be verified :—*I ascend to My Father and to your Father ; to My God and to your God.* How they must have listened to every syllable pronounced by Him, as they gazed upon that majestic Form—that beautiful Face, and found it difficult to realise that He Who had been their constant companion would so soon—within a few minutes, be gone : gone back to the Home of which He had so often spoken to them. Let us too,

with them, admire the beauty of His Divine Features, the majesty of His Bearing, the feeling graciousness with which He bids them farewell ; we hear Him telling them that they are to be *witnesses unto Him to the uttermost part of the earth*, but that until *they be endued with power from on high*, they must not quit Jerusalem. Looking into the thoughts of the Disciples, may we not sympathise in their sorrow, as they feel, by anticipation, a painful sense of helplessness. Yet we find them submissive, and full of confidence in the promises of their Divine Master ; this teaches us that we too, however we may dread our own weakness and helplessness, must be ready to sacrifice the sweetness of His sensible Presence, directly it pleases Him to deprive us of it. To-day, as we look up into Heaven, we see its Hosts preparing to go forth to meet their King, to adorn His triumph, and to accompany Him in royal state to the Throne of power and glory, as Victor over sin and death. The Heavenly Jerusalem has been longing to celebrate His praises, and to hear within her gates the new song in honour of *the Lamb that was slain*. But though Heaven now echoes with these joyous strains, and our Love is taken up out of our sight, earth may not weep for envy, for He dwells still within the homes she offers Him—the hearts of the Faithful—and the Ciborium.

II. POINT.

The triumph of our Ascended King.

Jesus lifts His Hands, and as His blessing falls upon the Disciples, those Sacred Feet—which had in Bethlehem been caressed by Mary—which had been covered with the tears and kisses of the Magdalene—which had been pierced upon the Cross—leave their impress on that sacred spot ; and He

rises slowly into the air. There a bright cloud is awaiting Him, and forms the golden tissue which veils our Lord from the enraptured gaze of those, through whom His farewell benediction will be transmitted to the Faithful in all ages. But the eye of faith may, in some sort, pierce the cloud which hides the glorious scene beyond ; and we see the brilliant legions of cherubim and seraphim winging their way with rapid flight to encircle their King, as they welcome Him with songs of joy and victory. *The eternal gates are lifted up, the Lord Who is Strong and Mighty, the Lord Mighty in battle* enters within them ; leaving behind Him thousands of brilliant thrones, He passes to His own at the Right Hand of the Father, thence to reign for ever. The Angels' hymns of praise are taken up by all the Saints to whom Jesus has opened Paradise to-day, and they too commence the endless Alleluia, with which the vaults of Heaven shall echo for ever and for ever. What a subject of joy is the contemplation of the mystery of the Ascension to us, if we are true friends of Jesus Christ ! Mingling our voices with those of the celestial Choir, we can even here below celebrate the triumph of our Saviour, and the glories amidst which His victories have placed Him. We can be happy in and through His perfect happiness, in returning to His Father. The desire of seeing Him as He is, makes us long for the end of the term of our exile—for deliverance from the fetters which bind us to earth—that we too may soar away to the Bosom of God.

COLLOQUY.

O my Jesus, as I contemplate Thy glorious Ascension, I am filled with eager longing to join the Angels there, where they sing their songs of triumph to-day. Not yet, however, may I enjoy this happiness ; this I have not yet merited ! My

fidelity as a good soldier must be proved like Thine—by combat—by suffering. Thou was not crowned before the fight—Thou didst not, as Man, ascend the throne of the Victor, until Thou hadst trampled upon death and hell. Give me grace and strength to tread down the enemies of my salvation : then shall I, ere long, share in the glory into which Thou didst enter, as on this Day. By the powerful attractions of Thy love may all those ties be severed, which too much attach me to the earth. Come back again, O Jesus, come quickly, and take me to my heavenly home !

RESOLUTION.

To raise my heart, my affections towards Heaven, and in spirit ascend there with Jesus.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

I will come again, and will take you to Myself.

PRAYER.

Soul of Christ.

Octave of the Ascension.—Friday.

The ascension of our hearts.

While the Disciples looked on, JESUS was raised up : and a cloud received Him out of their sight.—ACTS I.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us again represent to ourselves the Apostles on

Mount Olivet : they are gazing up towards Heaven, and cannot quit the place where their Dear Master has left them.

II. PRELUDE.

From Thy glorious Abode, O Ascended Lord, do Thou deign to draw our hearts to Thyself : detaching them more and more from all terrestrial objects, cause them to rise day by day towards Heaven.

I. POINT.

Where our treasure is, there is our heart also.

The primary cause of our hearts being drawn towards Heaven is that our Lord Jesus Christ—the God-Man—is there ; seated upon His Throne—thence reigning over His faithful subjects. He knows so well how the human heart has a tendency rather to sink than to rise ; the weight of its natural inclinations bears it down to earth, and the body being a burden to the soul, hinders us from lifting our thoughts and affections above the lower regions of sense.—Therefore, He has Himself undertaken to raise us above the world by the exterior attraction of His Sacred Humanity—glorified after His Resurrection. He shewed Himself by many proofs to His chosen witnesses, so beautiful—so perfect, and then withdrew from their sight—from ours. He acted thus to draw us away from earth : *if haply we may feel after Him and find Him in Heaven.* Knowing somewhat of Him (if we may so say) personally, our desire to know more ought to increase ; and we should become more convinced that our hearts were never made for earthly and perishable things. Why are our souls creeping along in the dust, when they should be soaring ever towards Him Who is awaiting us in Heaven ? O Jesus, may Thy love which

caused Thee to descend towards us, lift us up towards Thyself : may every other love be merged in Thine, and all that is not Thee disappear from before the eyes of our soul, which should be ever *looking on Jesus*. Nothing here can render us really happy, we cannot here find repose, *for where our Treasure—our Jesus is, there must our hearts be also*, if they would know true peace, true happiness.

II. POINT.

The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is the second cause of our hearts ascending towards Heaven.

The Holy Spirit, dwelling in our soul, is that Source of grace which gives to it life and energy.—One of the peculiarities of fire is, that it seeks to rise : so the soul, filled with the divine fire which the Holy Spirit enkindles therein, mounts up towards Heaven. And why ? simply because Jesus—the Centre of our heart's love and happiness is there. Again, that sanctifying grace which the Blessed Spirit sheds abroad in the soul in which He dwells, is like a fountain of living water ; which, flowing down from Heaven, springs upwards to it again : it bedews the soul, and then carries its aspirations back to the Divine Source of all celestial benediction. Once again, the unction of the Holy Spirit, and the sweetness of heavenly consolation which He pours into our hearts, makes us lose all relish for the things of the world ; because, as Saint Gregory says : “ A heart that has tasted the delights furnished by the Holy Spirit of God, finds all earthly pleasures unsatisfying and insipid. The delicate food wherewith He nourishes the soul is sweeter than honey, the wine of His consolation inebriates it with joy.”

COLLOQUY.

O my Jesus, how can it be that aught has power to arrest

my heart, and keep it engrossed with the things of earth? Thou art in Heaven—why then should any thing in this world detain my affections? These wandering thoughts—these desires which do not tend straight towards Thee—when shall I be free from them? Henceforth let me yield myself to the sweet attraction of Thy love, and to the guidance of Thy Spirit; so that I may more readily and surely fly from the allurements of the world, and that the home of my thoughts and affections may be Heaven.

RESOLUTION.

To make the Novena, begun to-day, in company with the Disciples assembled in the Upper-Room at Jerusalem.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Earth seems to me to be of very little moment, when I think about Heaven.

PRAYER.

Our Father, and Hail Mary.

Octave of the Ascension.—Saturday.

Our spiritual ascension.

Why stand ye looking up to Heaven?—ACTS I.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us imagine the Angels asking the Apostles why they were looking up to Heaven; and share in their evident longing to follow their Master.

II. PRELUDE.

O Jesus, in calling us to Thy service Thou hast bestowed on us a special mark of predestination : grant that we may be ever tending towards our heavenly Country, to which Thou hast returned.

I. POINT.

We should daily, by means of a spiritual resurrection, prepare for our actual ascension into Heaven.

We may with profit to ourselves consider how the Resurrection of Jesus Christ was followed by His Ascension : our own spiritual resurrection furnishes us with means of ascending towards God—of following Jesus into the heavenly Jerusalem, and dwelling there by a mystical union of our hearts with His Divine Heart. How then are we to bring about this spiritual ascension? It is by rising above our passions and vices :—we lift ourselves out of our vices when we cast them aside ; we raise ourselves above our passions when we overcome them by the power of grace. As Saint Augustine says : “neither pride nor sensuality can enter Heaven—we certainly cannot take them with us in following Jesus—yet by putting them under our feet they will serve as a ladder whereby to mount thither”.—A second means is to detach our hearts from the goods of this world ; because they will badly repay our carefulness, either in procuring or retaining them.—And a third means whereby we may ascend towards God is, to despoil ourselves of self-love—to leave self behind. Thus disencumbered we shall assuredly rise, not only from the tomb of earthliness, but up beyond the cloud of imperfections, which so often hides our Lord from us. So shall we spiritually ascend into Heaven : being held

aloof from the world by holy thoughts, fervent desires, and supernatural motives in the performance of good works. Can a traveller forget his destination? an exile cease to sigh after his own country? How then can we—travellers through a weary world—exiles in a desert land—turn away our thoughts from that heavenly Country, where we shall find a secure inheritance, and rest and joy in the unveiled Presence of God.

II. POINT.

It is charity alone which should cause us to descend to earth.

If we, in thought, dwell continually in Heaven, nothing earthly—no merely human considerations—will be capable of withdrawing us from that happy abode. There is only one motive truly good which will recall us to this world—that same motive which brought Jesus down to earth, and which actuated the Apostles in all their relations with the world after their Master left them. This motive is charity; which indeed obliges us to leave the higher regions of contemplation to succour our neighbour, and to practise for his benefit, corporal as well as spiritual works of mercy. In doing this we shall imitate the Angels, whose highest perfection lies in their accomplishing the Will of God by directing souls in the way of salvation. *Are they not all ministering spirits?* We shall then also be able to say with Saint Paul: *I am straitened between two; having a desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ, a thing by far the better: But to abide still in the flesh is needful. . . . What I shall choose I know not.* He leaves his affections in Heaven, but is willing to remain on earth, to do the Will of God, and promote the glory of Jesus by instructing his brethren, and labouring to increase

their love for his Beloved Master. We may clearly perceive from these examples what a claim charity has upon us ; and the happiness of making Jesus to be better known and loved. To compass this, what ought we not to be willing to relinquish ?—to be ready to suffer ?

COLLOQUY.

I thank Thee, O my Saviour, for having deigned to make me understand that the exercise of charity, in obedience to the Will of God, is so pleasing to Thee. Let this alone occupy those thoughts which are not given directly to heavenly things ; and may supernatural motives guide me in exterior works of mercy. To gain more courage in undertaking these, to persevere in active service for Thee, I will often look up to Heaven and contemplate Thee, O my God, and Thy Holy Mother and the Saints ; whose example will incite me to follow in their footsteps until I join the company of the Blessed. Happy shall I account myself if somewhat of the sacred love which reigns in Heaven, reign now in my heart.

RESOLUTION.

To let my thoughts be occupied only with love for Jesus : to prove this by acts of charity towards my neighbour.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

My conversation is in Heaven.

PRAYER.

Take, O Lord, and receive.

Octave of the Ascension.—Sunday.

Jesus leaves His Footprints on Mount Olivet.

Behold upon the mountains the Feet of Him that bringeth good tidings, and that preacheth peace.—NAHUM I.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us go in spirit to Mount Olivet, and kiss the sacred ground which received the impress of the Holy Feet of the Saviour.

II. PRELUDE.

Divine Master, Who in leaving Thy Footprints on the earth, dost invite us to follow Thee, grant that our highest aim may be to trace out Thy Footsteps, and to walk in the path which Thou hast trodden.

I. POINT.

Our Lord left on earth the impress of His Sacred Feet.

All that relates to the Sacred Person of the God-Man, and leads us to the contemplation of It, should be infinitely dear to us. In imprinting His Feet upon the spot whence He was raised up towards Heaven, He seems thus to speak to us :—I am now about to open for you the Realms of Glory, but if you would rise thither after Me, you must walk in My Footsteps—do what you have seen Me do during My earthly career—imitate Me in the practice of all those virtues which you perceive in Me.—O beautiful Footsteps of Jesus, which have imprinted benedictions upon the earth,

and indicated the path we too must tread! What happiness can exceed that of faithful souls who love to trace their way through this life by observing closely their Lord's injunction: *If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself.* In denying ourselves we learn to imitate Jesus, Whose life was one long act of self-denial; and thus our love for Him is brought out and increased. As we in spirit kneel in adoration there, where Jesus was taken up from the earth, we may well think upon the advantages and effects of our love for Jesus Christ. Of one who loves Him not, the Apostle says: *let him be anathema*: one who loves Him feebly, is an imperfect Christian. To love Him as a true Christian, is to desire—is to strive to love Him more and more; persuaded that we can never do so enough, never as much as the unspeakable excess of His love, for us, merits. But to suppose that our Saviour can be loved without being imitated is a palpable illusion—a vain affection—both sterilizing and deceitful. All may be imitators of Jesus Christ, all—of whatever state and condition.* To all—kings and subjects, those occupying a public or private position, such as are in prosperity or adversity, the rich and the poor, the happy and the disconsolate—our Divine Model offers an example in the Mysteries of His Life; in His marvellous, yet simple practice of every virtue: His doctrine, His lessons, all may understand. We may judge of our own degree of love for Him, by our aptitude in imitating Him—in reverencing His Footsteps.

II. POINT.

It was from the mountain of prayer, and of suffering, that Jesus Christ ascended to Heaven.

It was not without a mystic reason that our Lord chose

Mount Olivet as the place whence His triumphant Ascension should take place. Often had that mountain witnessed His vigils and His prayers, for often had He retired there for the night, to hold converse with His Heavenly Father: near its base the first drops of His Precious Blood had been shed, at the beginning of the dread Passion: therefore, Jesus willed that it should be also the scene of His glory, and serve Him as a footstool from which He would mount to His Throne in Heaven. Let us endeavour to comprehend the meaning of this Mystery, which shows us so clearly the priceless benefits of prayer and suffering: the effect of one, as of the other, is that the heart, and soul, and mind, are elevated towards God; the senses becoming disengaged from terrestrial things. Out of the valley of humiliation we pass on, and gain the heights of prayer; and from these ascend into the regions of perpetual adoration, and longings after divine love. Let us go as Jesus did to the mountain of suffering and meditation, and having followed Him thus far, *the heavens will be bowed towards us, and we shall enter within the veil, where the Forerunner, Jesus, is entered.*

COLLOQUY.

Yes, my Dear Lord, I understand how right and necessary it is that I should tread in Thy Footsteps, if I aspire to the happiness of reaching Thy Throne in glory. Give me help to discover them, so that I may have no doubts about my path—may not lose my way. I need grace also to follow without delay, wherever they may lead; for I am so prone to put off the taking of the next step, when it is a difficult or painful one. May the contemplation of Thy last Footprints on Mount Olivet encourage and console me; and make me press forward to reach the heights whence I may pass away to Thee.

RESOLUTION.

To take difficult steps in virtue, when Jesus, by His example, points them out.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Perfect Thou my goings in Thy paths.

PRAYER.

O Loving Jesus.

Octave of the Ascension.—Monday.**The Glory of Jesus in Heaven.**

The Lord JESUS was taken up into Heaven, and sitteth on the Right Hand of God.—S. MARK XVI.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent to ourselves Heaven, all brilliant with the glory of God. There we see Jesus at the Right Hand of the Father, graciously looking down upon us.

II. PRELUDE.

Grant, O Lord, that in contemplating Thy glory our souls may experience a holy joy, which may render the imitation of Thy virtues easier to us.

I. POINT.

Jesus Christ, the Divine Head of the predestined, has entered into His eternal Kingdom.

After having accomplished the Mysteries of His Life, and fulfilled the laborious Mission He had received from His Father, the Son of God, clothed in His Sacred Humanity, entered the Abode of everlasting rest ; there to enjoy infinite glory and perfect happiness, and to be the Object of continual adoration to the Angels and Saints. This glory is due to the labours of the God-Man ; it is the reward of His toil, His humiliation, His suffering, during His Life on earth. Like a conqueror laden with rich spoils and wearing the victor's crown, He returns to His Kingdom : surrounded with a new splendour, He mounts the steps of His Throne. This is our Victorious King ! As we contemplate His glory, together with all the celestial Court, let us render Him our homage ; and eagerly desire that happy moment when we shall be permitted to behold Him Face to face, to participate in His sovereign beatitude, and to enjoy all those delights, an idea of which has not entered into the mind of man. Yes ! the glory, the repose which awaited Jesus—our Divine Head—awaits His members also ; He has by His merits, acquired them for us. He is Himself preparing thrones, and crowns of recompense for those who, after His example, have fought and won. Should we not take fresh courage then ? Those high hopes which were once ardent enough to make us renounce the world, ought now to encourage us to renounce self, so that we might live only for Heaven.

II. POINT.

In order to participate in the glory of our Adorable Head, we—His members—should be animated with His Spirit, and live in His Life.

How can we hope to obtain a crown resembling our

Lord's, unless we strive to win it as He did? What then are we doing for our future life—eternity? What spirit is it which actuates us in all our duties? in the outward keeping of our Rule of life? Have we a true desire to accomplish the will of God? to promote His glory and to save souls? If we have embraced a life similar to that of our Lord, a life of obedience, of poverty, of humility, of self-sacrifice; is it with fervour that we fulfil the obligations of our holy profession?—Should we stand in need of encouragement, after replying faithfully to these questions, may we not reassure ourselves with the thought, that we are at least intent on journeying along the same road as that by which Jesus Christ journeyed; that all the practices of devotion, and acts of charity prescribed by our holy observance, are so many steps to raise us towards Heaven? If we were persuaded of this, we should not find our obligations too rigorous—too painful, as we are apt to do. We should regard our present state of life as the gateway of the royal domains which we shall inherit; it is so quickly passed through, and eternity lies stretched before us.—What a joy will it be to have been the companion of the poor, the suffering, the humble Saviour, on that day when we enter into possession of the treasures of the Kingdom of God. Did He not say: *In My Father's House there are many mansions: I go to prepare a place for you?*

COLLOQUY.

Who am I, my Jesus, that I should share in Thy glory, and reign with Thee in the assembly of the Saints? Truly Thy magnanimity is shown towards me, Thy poor unworthy child! It was not for Thy own Sake alone that Thou didst return to the Kingdom of Thy Father, but for mine also. Thou wouldst be there to receive me; Thou art awaiting

my arrival on that day, which Thou hast Thyself marked for my entrance into Paradise. Why is it that I still remain here? What is it that detains me? Nothing but Thy holy Will, to which I will submit faithfully, by Thy grace; but I long to hear Thee say: *Come! possess the kingdom prepared for you.*

RESOLUTION.

In all I do, to work for Heaven.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

On the Cross for a moment, in Heaven for ever.

PRAYER.

Our Father and Hail Mary.

Octave of the Ascension.—Tuesday.

The Occupation of Jesus in Heaven.

JESUS is entered into Heaven, that He may appear now in the presence of God for us.—HEBREWS IX.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us again, in thought, go up into Heaven, and see our Adorable Saviour in His glory, still fulfilling His Office as such.

II. PRELUDE.

Give us grace, O Lord, to gain better courage from the continually fresh proofs of charity Thou bestowest on us.

I. POINT.

What the occupation of our Lord Jesus is in Heaven.

When on earth our Lord occupied Himself entirely in securing the happiness of the human race : His occupation in Heaven is the same. He is ever our devoted Intercessor—our constant Benefactor—our loving Saviour. From the height of His Throne He is attentive to our great and little needs, He intercedes unceasingly with His Father for us—that our pardon may be obtained. As our All-powerful Advocate, He pleads our cause ; renders our prayers, our homage, our good works acceptable ; for by uniting them to His own, He makes them meritorious before God : *for no man cometh to the Father but by Him*. We learn from this how important it is always to unite our actions, and our prayers, to those of our Divine Meditator. His Eye is upon us at all times ; His Ear is always open to receive our supplications : His love and His goodness are infinite. Do we ever seriously reflect on the sublime privileges we possess in having a great *High-Priest That hath passed into the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God ? One Who can have compassion on our infirmities ?* In hours of trial, what a source of consolation ought this to be,—and at all times an inducement to go with confidence to the throne of grace.

II. POINT.

Our Divine Saviour is preparing for us a place in Heaven.

And I dispose to you, as My Father hath disposed to Me,

a Kingdom. Here we see how the Word, by Whom all things were made, disposes also of all things in Heaven, as well as on earth. He shows us that there is a crown destined for, a throne awaiting us ; and the eternal riches too, that He has acquired for our benefit : He shows us all this in order to inflame our desires after heavenly things, and to excite our courage to fight against the difficulties we may have to encounter. Are we able to comprehend what our Lord is doing on our behalf ? He is preparing our place in Heaven, and at the same time pleading for us with God the Father, that for His own merits' sake, He may no more remember our offences. What the future results of our Divine Advocate's good offices on our behalf will be, we cannot fully realise, until we find ourselves there, where *God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes : and death shall be no more, nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow, for the former things are passed away.* Rest, never-changing felicity, inexhaustible treasure—such will be the portion of the elect. But to all this even, our happiness is not to be limited : higher bliss awaits us, as we further learn from Saint John. *When He shall appear we shall be like to Him : because we shall see Him as He is.* God will discover to us His Divine Perfections, and being like to Him—united in an ineffable manner with Him—we shall be happy with His happiness, glorious with His glory. Loving Him, possessing Him, our joy will be as ineffable in its greatness, as it will be eternal in its duration. And this is what the love of Jesus is offering us ! Are we labouring during the short span of this life to merit it ? Are we ready ? (in accordance with the advice given by our Lord) *since we know neither the day nor the hour when He shall come ?* Amongst the virgins who were called to the Marriage of the Bridegroom, those only were admitted to the Banquet who were prepared for His coming.

COLLOQUY.

O my God, when will it be that I, being admitted to the enjoyment of the clear vision of Thy adorable Perfections, shall really see Thee as Thou art? When will my soul be disengaged from this body, in which she is held captive? *Who will give me wings like a dove, and I will fly and be at rest?* Accept, O my Saviour—Who from Heaven dost stimulate me to acts of patience and courage—accept my thanksgiving for all Thou hast done and art now doing for me there. I renew the sacrifice of my whole being to Thee, as an act of gratitude; and look forward to the time when I shall be able to offer Thee a better sacrifice of praise, of benediction, and of love in Thy Kingdom.

RESOLUTION.

Often to think of Jesus, as my Advocate with God the Father.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Jesus, our Great High-Priest, makes intercession for me.

PRAYER.

Our Father, and Hail Mary.

Octave of the Ascension.—Wednesday.

The Joy of the Saints at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

Jesus, Who is taken up from you into Heaven, shall so come as you have seen Him going into Heaven—ACTS I.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us imagine that we see Jesus Christ coming again at the end of the world ; all resplendent with glory, and seated on a bright cloud, He will be escorted by His Saints.

II. PRELUDE.

O Saviour grant, that profiting by the many graces attached to Thy First Coming, we may merit to partake in the glory of Thy Second Advent.

I. POINT.

The sight of their Saviour, when He shall come again in glory, will be the first cause of the joy of the elect.

If the Friend of the Bridegroom, as Saint John-the-Baptist says, *rejoiced at the sound of His Voice*—if the Apostles on Mount Thabor, in contemplating Jesus, became enraptured—if all those who heard His discourses experienced an unspeakable happiness—if the charm of His Appearance and of His Words was so great, that the people could not refrain from following Him—what will be the joy of the Saints on the great Day of His glorious manifestation, when they will behold their Lord in all the radiancy and beauty of His divine Majesty ? what will be their gladness when He appears before them as a Bridegroom, adorned with His richest ornaments ; and with unspeakable goodness says to them : *Come, ye blessed of My Father, possess you the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world ?* O Jesus, how great is our privilege, our advantage, in that we are permitted to serve Thee, and to love Thee—and thus to become Saints ! Blessed are they who already enjoy Thy Presence in Paradise, while they wait for the more perfect

fruition of happiness, when both their bodies and souls will *enter into the joy of their Lord*. And since they are witnesses of our strife against those enemies who would rob us of our inheritance, we do well to secure their prayers before the Throne of God, on our behalf.

II. POINT.

The glory of the elect at the Coming of Jesus, will be the second cause of their joy.

With our finite comprehension we can little understand what the radiant beauty of the Saints will be, when they shall appear clothed in the splendour and brilliancy of heavenly light, but their glory will be enhanced in a still more inconceivable manner when the Son of God shall declare, and that before the whole world, the services they have respectively rendered Him. He will honour and extol them, and will give to each one a recompense proportionate to the good works done for Himself. They who shall have willingly suffered humiliations, and would gladly have been accounted still more contemptible here below, will be the most honoured in that great Day: they who have endured with the most patience, and lived the most truly mortified lives, shall then be raised to the highest degree of glory. And they who, in order to make known Jesus and His doctrine, have renounced the world—its pleasures—its advantages—*and instructed many to justice, shall shine as stars for all eternity*. What more fitting to encourage us than these considerations! That mortification—known only to God—by which a fault is repressed, a passion subdued: that trouble of mind or body, suffered in silence for love of Jesus: this sacrifice which obedience demands: this word unspoken, just to please Him—the least act of virtue, in fact, will be, on that

Day of Recompense, brought to light, and will receive the highest commendation from the Lips of the Son of the Most High. Let us take courage then, and labour zealously to gain hearts to Jesus, and to increase our merits by a more complete fidelity to our holy Rules, so that we may *be numbered with the Saints in glory everlasting.*

COLLOQUY.

Thou, O my Saviour, hast said : *Surely, I come quickly. Amen—Come Lord Jesus,* do I reply, come, and let me behold Thee in Thy glory ! Am I worthy to partake in it ? What joy it will be to have served so good a Master ! what joy to have suffered some contempt, some privation for Thy Sake ! Reanimate my zeal, so that I may spend the days which remain to me here *in redeeming the time*, employing them only for eternity ; and that Thy Second Coming may be to me a cause of endless joy.

RESOLUTION.

Faithfully to perform my most difficult duties, thinking of the Day of Recompense.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

He will render to every man according to His works.

PRAYER.

Our Father, and Hail Mary.

Octave of the Ascension.—Thursday.

Preparation for the Descent of the Holy Spirit.

It is not for you to know the time or moments which the Father hath put in His own power : But you shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you.—ACTS I.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us see the Apostles, who have retired within the closed doors of the Upper-Room, there to prepare themselves with due carefulness for the Coming of the Holy Ghost.

II. PRELUDE.

O God, grant that understanding the need we have of Thy Blessed Spirit, we may fervently prepare to receive His seven-fold Gifts.

I. POINT.

The great need we have of the Holy Spirit.

Although our mission is much less important than that of the Apostles, it is nevertheless certain that in accomplishing ours, we participate in theirs. Whatever our vocation may be, it exacts a degree of virtue and of devotedness which would be perfectly unattainable, if we were left to ourselves—if we were uninfluenced by the Holy Spirit of God. Seeing that the Apostles, who had been instructed in the school of Jesus Christ, formed by His example, enriched with His grace, were unable to fulfil their mission, *until they had been endued with power from on high*, how can we, still

more weak, imperfect, inconstant, perform the duties of our state of life without the aid which it is the office of the Third Person of the Holy, Undivided Trinity to bestow? How could we preserve ourselves from the seductions of the world in which we live—or which would live in us—if we were not unceasingly warned and guided by the Good Spirit, Who acts in opposition to it. Of true spirituality, which of ourselves we cannot possess, He is the Source : it behoves us then to obtain this from Him, by earnest prayer. By the grace of God we are aware of our own deficiencies, but let us ask Him to make us more thoroughly understand, (especially at this time) our nothingness and our incapacity ; so that feeling the need we have of His Spirit within us, we may by a fervent preparation for Pentecost, draw down His favours ; the word of prophecy being fulfilled : *I will pour out waters upon the thirsty ground, and streams upon the dry land.*

II. POINT.

The necessity of preparing ourselves to receive the Holy Spirit.

How can a heart, attached to creatures, under subjection to its own passions, receive the Blessed Spirit and the abundance of His grace, when our Lord says that His Spirit cannot dwell where the evil inclinations of corrupt nature are not subdued ? We learn from the Apostles that fervour is requisite, to make due preparation for the approaching Festival in honour of the Third Person of the Holy Trinity. There must be the preparation of a clean heart, so that nothing may remain therein which might be offensive in the sight of the Divine Guest : and the preparation of ardent desire—desire of truly receiving from Him *every best gift*,

and every perfect gift. Most agreeable to Him is that disposition of soul which inclines us to long after justice and holiness : the Apostles received the plenitude of His celestial gifts, because they desired them with intense ardour, and *were persevering with one mind in prayer.* Are we making our Novena with equal assiduity ? Are we using these days of grace as if we felt their eternal importance ? Let us avoid every action which may displease the Holy Ghost ; shun with constant watchfulness the smallest faults ; banish all unruly affections ; and continue to pray that *God will pour out His Spirit*, again in these days, upon each one of us, and upon the whole Church : that we may be endued with a renewal of power from on high, and that She, our Holy Mother, may be comforted and refreshed by the streams of grace and of divine knowledge which shall be shed abroad at this time, in answer to the persevering prayer of Her children.

COLLOQUY.

O my Jesus ! by Thy mercy these days of grace and of salvation are prepared for me ; and on my part Thou dost ask only that I feel my nothingness, my utter dependence on Thy bounty ; and earnestly desire that *Thou wilt send the Promise of the Father upon me.* I am indeed conscious of, and sincerely acknowledge, my slothfulness and frailty. How often have I seen these holy days, when the Blessed Spirit is pleased to pour down His gifts in larger measure, pass away, without having availed myself of the precious advantages they offer—just because I have made so poor a preparation for the reception of this Heavenly Guest when He comes to renew His seven-fold gifts in faithful hearts. By God's help, I will imitate the Apostles, and persevere in

prayer, in union with all those who are asking especially at this time to be further *endued with power from on high*.

RESOLUTION.

To draw the gifts of Holy Spirit upon myself by the fervour of my desires—the cleansing of my heart—the avoiding of the smallest fault—and a more entire detachment from all creatures.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Come, O Holy Spirit ! Come, O Light of our hearts !

PRAYER.

O God, Who didst teach.

Friday after the Octave of the Ascension.

Preparation for the Coming of the Holy Spirit.

All the Apostles were persevering, with one mind, in prayer, with the women, and Mary, the Mother of JESUS, and with His brethren.—ACTS I.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent to ourselves the Upper-Room, and see the persons assembled there, in deep recollection ; and in fervent, continued prayer.

II. PRELUDE.

Grant, O God, that preparing our hearts to celebrate

aright the Coming of Thy Holy Spirit, we may merit to receive the abundance of His grace.

I. POINT.

The example of the Apostles teaches us how we ought to prepare for the approaching Festival.

We see that the Apostles, believing in the promise given by their Divine Lord, disposed themselves to make a preparation worthy of Him *Who proceedeth from the Father and the Son, Who together with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified*. They laid aside every occupation which might disturb their minds; they withdrew to the Upper-Room to avoid all intercourse with the world; they gave themselves up to profound recollection; they kept absolute silence; and all this, that they might spend the intervening time in raising their thoughts to Heaven, whence they expected the Paraclete. We perceive by this that it is not sufficient to purify our souls from such stains of sin, which, if left there, would be an outrage to the Adorable Person of the Holy Ghost. More is needed; for being opposed even to slight dissipation of mind, He seeks and finds a place of rest only in the calm and recollection of a peaceful soul. If then we desire to participate in the abundant graces with which the fervent Apostles were replenished, it is necessary to enter into a more perfect solitude; to keep our senses, both interior and exterior, under stricter control; and to hold intercourse with others so far only as necessity or charity obliges us.—To such souls will the Holy Spirit come with pleasure, therein repose, and take up His abode.

II. POINT.

Some of the virtues practised by the Apostles whilst waiting for the Descent of the Holy Spirit.

These virtues were : a lively faith in the words which had been spoken by their Master,—an entire confidence in the promise He had given concerning the Sending of the Spirit, Who should be their guide,—and charity, demonstrated by the close union which existed between them, so that *they had but one heart and one soul*. It is not to the Apostles alone that Jesus has promised His Divine Spirit, but to His Church at large—to each member of it, who will correspond to His designs, and allow himself to be directed by His inspirations. Tertullian says “that each day would resemble the Day of Pentecost, provided we always possessed the fervour of the Apostles”. At this particular time, when the Church is about to celebrate so great a Mystery, it is very important to reanimate our zeal, in order to attract to ourselves those graces which the Holy Spirit, in His Divine Office as Giver of strength and consolation, now dispenses with such liberality. Let us imitate the Apostles, in being united one with the other, by a sincere charity : let us pray with more intensity of desire than usual, and while we express the longings of our soul to God, live in complete dependence on Him ; for He—Our Father—from Heaven will assuredly *give the Good Spirit to them that ask Him*. He is so pleased when we make known our requests for heavenly gifts, that He acknowledges, as it were, His obligation to us ; since we then shew the highest appreciation of His fatherly goodness that we can shew, and open by our petitions those fountains of love and compassion which are at His command. *The Lord will do the will of them that fear Him : and He will hear their prayer.*

COLLOQUY.

O my God, give to me the true spirit of prayer, and lead me into such interior solitude, that I may be worthy to receive those precious gifts of grace, which it is the office of the Paraclete to bestow. Do Thou, O Blessed Spirit, come to me with the light of Thy grace and the fire of Thy love. Enkindle in my heart Thy divine ardour, so that like the Apostles I may hereafter be more zealous and fervent in the service of my Master and theirs; and labour with a like spirit of generosity, to promote the glory of God, and the sanctification of souls.

RESOLUTION.

To practise recollection, and often call upon God the Holy Ghost.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Come, holy Spirit, fill the hearts of the Faithful: and kindle in them the fire of Thy love.

PRAYER.

O God, Who didst teach.

Saturday after the Octave of the Ascension.

The Mission of the Holy Ghost is the fruit of the merits of Jesus Christ.

I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Paraclete, that He may abide with you for ever.—S. JOHN XIV.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent to ourselves Jesus in His glory, continuing the work of the sanctification of men, by the Mission of the Holy Ghost.

II. PRELUDE.

O Jesus, to all the graces Thou hast accorded us, may we ask Thee to add further gifts of Thy sanctifying Spirit, so that the work of our sanctification may be confirmed—perfected.

I. POINT.

The Holy Ghost is sent from Heaven to be the Consoler of the Church. As Saint Athanasius remarks, the Holy Spirit is never mentioned in the Old Testament under the name of Paraclete ; the reason of which is expressed in the words of Jesus Christ : *If I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you : but if I go, I will send Him to you.* It was ordained that Jesus should enter into His glory, before the Sending of the Holy Spirit as the Consoler ; and the interior consolation and enlightenment which He would give, our Lord declares to be more advantageous to His Disciples, than His own visible Presence. *It is expedient to you that I go.* And to just souls how unspeakably precious are the effects of the indwelling of the Paraclete, Who consoles in three ways principally : firstly, with regard to our state of uncertainty about our salvation, which in itself is alarming when we consider that all our senses, our powers, our passions would give rise constantly to sin, unless kept in check by opposing acts of virtue. Without grace, all within us naturally tends to evil ; we could not merit final perseverance if the direction and protection of God failed us. But

to meet this difficulty, which might otherwise overwhelm the soul with sadness, *the Spirit Himself giveth testimony to our spirit, that we are the sons of God : and if sons, joint-heirs with Christ.* This inward testimony banishes fear, and inspires us with a certainty of the position we hold with regard to God.—Secondly, the Holy Spirit sustains us in all the temptations, troubles and afflictions of this life ; the unction of His grace animates our souls, strengthens them, lessens their trials, helps them to overcome evil, and causes them to find consolation in the Cross. Thirdly, the Holy Ghost consoles the Church Militant during Her time of waiting and of combat : He unites us, Her children, in the *one holy vocation in which we are called*, entreating us to be *careful to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*

II. POINT.

Jesus promises the fulness of heavenly gifts to fervent souls.

When Jesus said : *If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink*, He was alluding to the outpouring of His Spirit *which they should receive, who believed in Him.* For as yet the Spirit was not given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. On another occasion He said : *The water that I will give (to him that thirsteth) shall become in him a fountain of water springing up unto life everlasting.* “And what do these sublime words signify,” says Saint Gregory, “if not that a soul truly athirst for divine grace, shall certainly receive in abundance of its refreshing streams? for it will be filled with the Holy Ghost.” Happy are we if we desire to be by Him thus divinely enriched—taught—renewed : if we are ready to follow His guidance, and yield ourselves up to His influence. But is it so? Are we

anxious to be made saints? Are we praying as the Mother of Jesus, the Apostles, the brethren, and holy women prayed? On this last day of the Novena, let us cast our eyes upon the pure Spouse of the Holy Ghost and see her as she entreats that He will descend upon the Infant Church; and then ask her to help us, by her intercession, to obtain a share in those graces and privileges which were, in her, the result of her divine union with God the Holy Spirit.

COLLOQUY.

O Holy Ghost, Living Source of heavenly gifts, come Thou and purify my soul; come Thou and refresh it. Cleanse it from all that is sinful, heal its diseases and water it with streams of grace, so that I may rejoice because the Lord shall have sanctified His abode. Empty me of myself and fill me with Thyself, so that hereafter in all I think, and say, and do, I may be actuated by Thee, O Holy Spirit of God.

RESOLUTION.

To keep my heart lifted up to Heaven to-day, waiting for the Descent of the Holy Spirit.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

In my soul take up thy rest, O holy Spirit of God!

PRAYER.

Our Father and Hail Mary.

Feast of Pentecost.

The Descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles.

When the days of the Pentecost were accomplished, they were all together in one place: And suddenly there came a sound from Heaven, as of a mighty wind coming, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting: And there appeared to them parted tongues, as it were of fire; and it sat upon every one of them: And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.—ACTS II.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent to ourselves the Apostles on the morning of the Day of Pentecost, still praying in the Upper-Room; —and Mary in the midst of them.

II. PRELUDE.

O Holy Ghost, descend Thou upon us, and effect in our hearts and lives so great and happy a change, that we may, like the Apostles, witness constantly to the Life and Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I. POINT.

Consideration of the actions of those assembled.

Let us in Spirit enter the Upper-Room where the Apostles are, and observe with what ardour they are praying; and how their faces bespeak the intensity of their desires. Sometimes prostrate, sometimes seated, their gaze is upturned towards Heaven, where their hearts are. They

await the results of their Dear Master's promise ; and the delay that there is in its realisation, far from weakening their confidence, increases it, together with their fervour. O holy and sweet confidence in Jesus ! in the case of the Apostles how highly art thou now to be repaid ! Come and reanimate our souls, so that we may share in the gifts of the Holy Spirit. It is the hour for us too, to make the immediate preparation for His Coming. The appointed moment which is to astonish the world by its wondrous effects, and to give life and energy to the Church, is at hand : the Miracle of Pentecost is about to be accomplished. Already a brilliant globe of light becomes visible : it is instantly resolved into tongues of fire, and these descend and rest upon the heads of those present. O Holy Spirit, deprive us not of the effects of Thy Visit : remember not our unworthiness, but come and take up Thy rest in our souls. *The Apostles, being filled with the Holy Ghost*, were instantaneously transformed : their former ignorance, worldly inclinations, selfish considerations, and cowardly timidity, have vanished—they have become Saints : and now worthy of their mission, they are full of burning zeal for the glory of their Adorable Master. O Lord, how wonderful Thou art in Thy works ! What power Thou hast over hearts ! Convert our hearts wholly unto Thee ; and so sanctify us by Thy grace that we may be living witnesses to its marvellous action, as were Thy chosen Apostles after the Descent of the Holy Ghost.

II. POINT.

Consideration of the words spoken by the Apostles.

The doors of that Upper-Room, which have been already consecrated by the Eucharist Feast kept within its walls, the

night before Jesus suffered, must no longer be closed against the multitude who are attracted thither. Both natural fear, and the desire of being undisturbed, induced the Apostles to take that precaution, but all fear is gone—and their call to active labour is immediately obeyed. Animated by an intrepid courage, *Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifts up his voice*, and speaks to the people who are gathered together, in that place which has been hallowed by the Sacraments of the One, Holy, Apostolic Church. *Ye men of Israel*, he says, *hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man approved by God among you, you by the hands of wicked men, have crucified and slain. This Jesus hath God raised again, whereof all we are witnesses. Know most certainly, that God hath made both Lord and Christ, this same Jesus, Whom you have crucified.* These words, inspired by the Holy Ghost, excited sorrow in the hearts of a great number. Three thousand being simultaneously converted, were baptized into the Church: *and the Lord increased daily together such as should be saved.* These were the immediate results of those tongues of Fire—of those extraordinary powers of speech which were conferred on the Apostles. Doubtless their Master's words came back to their minds: *It is the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you.* Are our words inspired and directed by the same Spirit? Have they for their purport the glory of God? and the edification of those who hear them? If we learn to speak the language of the Holy Spirit, we shall soon forget the language of the world. He will impart to our words such efficacy, that by them we shall influence others for good; and win them to God as we recount the wonders of His grace, and the marvels of redeeming love, exhibited in the Life of our Divine Saviour.

COLLOQUY.

O Holy Spirit, Who didst descend upon the Apostles, deign to descend also upon me ; convert my weakness into strength, my tepidity into zeal, my natural affections into those which are supernatural, that all in me being changed and renewed, I may become worthy to participate, in some degree, in their sublime mission. I beseech Thee, by the wonders Thou didst accomplish on this holy Day, that Thou wilt enkindle in me the fire of Thy love, and bestow on me such powers as may enable me to perform aright my daily duty of testifying to the truth of the Catholic Faith.

RESOLUTION.

To be very attentive to the inspirations of the Spirit of God, and to act in accordance with the direction He deigns to give to my words and conduct.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of the Faithful ; and kindle in them the Fire of Thy love.

PRAYER.

O God, Who didst teach.

Octave of Pentecost.—Monday.**The Mission of the Holy Spirit.**

They were all filled with the Holy Ghost.—ACTS II.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us again see the Apostles, full of holy ardour, proclaiming the Divinity of Jesus Christ.

II. PRELUDE.

Holy Spirit, make our souls to participate in the precious effects of Thy Mission, on the Day of Pentecost.

I. POINT.

The excellence of the Gift that Jesus has made us, in the sending of the Paraclete.

I will send Him to you. These words of our Lord Jesus call forth our deepest gratitude to Him, as we reflect on them after their fulfilment. It is not only the best gifts of Heaven, taken singly, that are ours as a consequence of His Descent at Pentecost, but God the Holy Ghost puts us in possession of Himself; we are in the enjoyment of His real Presence within us. The Son of God sends us His Holy Spirit to direct our souls; and to comfort them for the privation of His own visible Presence. *I will ask the Father and He shall give you another Paraclete:* and in virtue of this divine promise, He is sent on His miraculous Mission of sanctifying and consoling. By the power of the Holy Ghost we, as Christians, are freed from the slavery of evil passions, from the condition of bondage in which the world would enthrall us.—The effusion of His gifts effaces from the mind the esteem and the remembrance of earthly vanities; and banishes from the heart all affection or desire for them. They have the effect of delivering us from inquietude, over eagerness, the sway of natural impulse. Our spiritual powers being under divine control, are well

regulated,—we enjoy the peace and the liberty of the children of God. To what a degree of holiness should we not already have reached, had we only been always faithful to Thy guidance, O Holy Spirit of God ! Do Thou pardon all our offences—our negligences ; help us to amend the past, and so order our future life, that being led by Thee, we may prove ourselves to be the children of God.

II. POINT.

The happy state of a soul which corresponds faithfully to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit.

If we have not hitherto partaken in a larger measure of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, we shall have to work assiduously, and fight too, in the acquisition of virtue. It may be that by means of great labour and hard rowing, we are now endeavouring to cross the ocean of this life. But a day will come, if we are faithful in accepting the proffered assistance of the Blessed Spirit, when we shall find ourselves speeding full-sail towards the eternal port. Souls advanced in virtue, by His help, easily perform many things, which before appeared to them quite impossible—insufferable—overwhelmingly difficult. And this, because His power-bestowing influence enables us to surmount every obstacle—to over-ride all storms and tempests. Having gained the mastery over self, by yielding to this influence, we shall necessarily reason, judge, and act according to the directions received from our Heavenly Guide. To this influence may be traced those elevated thoughts and feelings so worthy of admiration in the Saints : they have been enlightened from on high, inspired with a love of holiness, and to them the practice of perfection has been made easy and delightful. Is it thus that the Adorable Spirit, sent down from the

Father and the Son, acts in us? is He faithfully obeyed? He uses no violence, He will not force souls to obey Him: His voice is so gentle that they only who are attentive, hear its soft whisperings—understand His divine language. If then we sincerely desire to live the life of holiness which our vocation exacts, let us place ourselves entirely under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, loving to be directed by Him in all things.

COLLOQUY.

O Divine Spirit, Director of my soul, how much indebted am I to Thee for the Presence of Thy Adorable Self within me. Pardon, I beseech Thee, my want of fidelity in obeying Thy Voice.—Henceforth I desire to abandon myself wholly to Thy guidance; to act, to speak, to love, in Thee and by Thee; so that in sanctifying myself, I may influence for good, those with whom duty and charity bring me into contact.

RESOLUTION.

To live in greater recollection, being ever attentive to the Holy Spirit's guidance.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

He will teach you all things.

PRAYER.

O God, Who didst teach.

Octave of Pentecost.—Tuesday.

The Law of Love given by the Holy Ghost.

The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, Who is given to us.—ROMANS V.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us recall the symbol under which the Holy Spirit appeared ; and imagine that we see those tongues of fire which shone upon the heads of each one of the Disciples.

II. PRELUDE.

O Holy Spirit, Who art the Spirit of Love, come and enkindle the fire of Thy Love in our hearts.

I. POINT.

The Holy Ghost comes to establish divine love in our hearts.

Jesus Christ, desiring to substitute the law of love for the law of fear, to which a hard-hearted and ungrateful people had been subjected, sent down to earth the Holy Ghost, Who is essentially the Spirit of Love. To make His charitable designs better understood, He sent the Paraclete under the form of fire, the properties of which are expressive of the effects of divine love. Thus as fire is characterized by its inherent power of enlightening, of purifying, of producing heat, and of elevating itself—so divine love (which is a supernatural, a sacred fire) illuminates the soul with its clear light—purifies it from all stain—enlightens it to understand the things of God—discovers the secrets of the spiritual life

—and lifts it up above the lower regions of sense into those which are supernal. These wonderful effects we see exemplified in the Apostles, after they had received the Holy Ghost. Their understanding, thus suddenly enlightened, distinguished and clearly comprehended all which, up to that moment, had been veiled by an impenetrable cloud of obscurity: their hitherto cold hearts immediately burned with the love of God: they gave themselves up to the exercise of the most heroic virtues: no longer ordinary men, they became, all at once, holy Apostles, generous-hearted Confessors, ready to consecrate their lives to their Master's cause, for the extension of His Kingdom. Henceforth they were capable of living in daily, joyous expectation of a martyr's death. Such too will be in us the precious effects of the hidden, but real Presence of the Spirit of Love, if no obstacle be put in the way of His divine operations.

II. POINT.

It is by Love that Jesus wills to reign in us.

We may trace this power of the Spirit of Love, throughout all the ages which have elapsed since that first Whit-Sunday morning, down to the present moment. Has not Jesus sent His Spirit of Love upon the Saints, in whom the most sublime effects of love have so eminently shone forth? Saint Augustine, Saint Gertrude, Saint Francis de Sales, Saint Teresa, St. Magdalene de Pazzi, and very many others (who in their respective vocations have made the Church illustrious) we may point out as striking proofs of the sway which the Spirit of God—that is the Spirit of Charity—has had over them. And who can number the hidden Saints living both in the cloister and in the world, who have led, or now lead the life of Angels? resisting the torrent of

worldly seductions by the power and virtue of heavenly love. Why then should we not aspire to this life? Why persuade ourselves that only Saints of the highest order can hope to lead it? This is a dangerous illusion, which, if entertained, is enough to leave us languishing for ever in our present state of tepidity and imperfectness. Why then, by a false humility, deprive ourselves of so many graces, while the Blessed Spirit is only waiting for an ardent desire, on our part, to obtain the Gifts He is ready to communicate. Let us forthwith empty our hearts of all earthly love, detach them from all created things: a strong resolve, a sincere desire can do this; and then the Spirit of God will dwell in us also, and make us saints.

COLLOQUY.

O Holy Spirit, Thou askest only to shed forth the sacred fire of Thy love in my soul! I ask pardon for having by my coldness so often grieved Thee. My heart is too full of self-love for Thy holy love to find room there; help me to remove all obstacles to Thy entrance: O God, make Thy abode with me. I understand better than I did that Thou alone art worthy of my affection. Come, Holy Spirit, and enkindle in me the light, the force, the ardour of Thy love.

RESOLUTION.

To merit the gift of holy love, by corresponding to the action of the Spirit of God.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

They that are according to the Spirit, mind the things that are of the Spirit.

PRAYER.

O God, Who didst teach.

Octave of Pentecost.—Wednesday.

The Practice of Divine Love.

The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, Who is given us.—ROMANS V.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us observe the Apostles after the Descent of the Holy Spirit: they live in the continual practice of divine charity, being occupied only in praying, preaching, and administering the Sacraments of the Church.

II. PRELUDE.

Holy Spirit, Who wast given to the Apostles, produce in us like effects of divine love.

I. POINT.

The effects of Heaven-sent Charity.

When divine charity possesses a soul, it manifests its presence by the sentiments it inspires, and the actions it produces. Therefore when a heart is full of the love of God, it has no greater joy than the joy of being constantly in the Presence of Him it loves. Sweet intercourse with Him—silence—prayer—these form the delight of such a heart. Unshackled by mere earthly attachments, our thoughts—desires—affections, tend upwards to their true Centre—the Creator. Nothing can surpass, nothing can excel the happiness of speaking to the Divine Majesty of the joy we find in doing His Blessed Will, of meditating on

the Mysteries of the Faith, and studying to make His Law the rule of our conduct. The royal Psalmist, in the ardour of his love exclaims—*O how great is the multitude of Thy sweetness, O Lord, which Thou hast hidden for them that love Thee: O love the Lord, all ye His Saints: He keepeth all those that love Him.* To love is to obey; it is an unvarying example of cause and effect. *If any man love Me he will keep My word.* Love is accompanied by joy, and facility in the accomplishing of the good pleasure of God; it naturally leads to the avoiding of all that might offend Him, and to the undertaking of any labour which could promote His glory. The effects of divine love are innumerable—inexhaustible. As we meditate upon them, what do we think of our shortcomings? of the way in which trifles pre-occupy our minds? What can we say in answer to the inquiry: Why so little desire after our own perfection, and for the sanctification of others? Must not the inference be that we have so little love for God.

II. POINT.

How we may feed the fire of divine Love.

In order to keep alive the sacred fire of divine charity in our hearts, we should be much occupied with Jesus and the thought of His perfections: retiring often into the solitude of the wilderness of contemplation, and there speaking with Him alone. Even in the midst of the ordinary duties of the most ordinary and busy life, we can frequently call up the remembrance of His claims upon our heart's best affections—make an act of spiritual Communion—an act of the Presence of God—ask His blessing—lift our eyes to the Image of our Dear Lord—reverentially kiss our Crucifix. Everywhere let us seek Him, for Love will discover Him

everywhere. We shall find Him within our own souls—we shall see Him in those with whom we come in contact—we can hear all nature speaking of Him—we may kneel before Him, dwelling in the Tabernacle. We adore Him as we look up, and behold Him seated on His Throne of Glory. Love takes pleasure in the question: *Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit?* knowing that it is unanswerable. The exercise then of the Presence of God is the effect of love, and the cause of obedience to His Holy Will; and as we now discover more clearly its absolute necessity, if we would advance in saintliness of life, it behoves us to practise it more faithfully.

COLLOQUY.

O Spirit of Love! when I think upon Thy divine operations in fervent souls, I am indeed ashamed of my coldness and my indifference. Give to my weak love more zeal in fanning the flame Thou hast enkindled in my heart. Is it so that I am delaying to make an entire sacrifice of the love of self, which tends to the extinguishing of the love of God? Help me to prove at least my desire for the decrease of the one, and the increase of the other; by practising the Presence of God more constantly, by obeying His Will more entirely.

RESOLUTION.

By frequent ejaculatory prayers, to ask for the Presence of the Spirit of Love in my soul.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Thou art the God of my heart.

PRAYER.

O God, Who didst teach.

Octave of Pentecost.—Thursday.

The Indwelling of the Holy Spirit places us necessarily under His personal direction.

The Father shall give you another Paraclete, the Spirit of Truth, Whom the world cannot receive : but you shall know Him, because He shall abide with you, and shall be in you.—
S. JOHN XIV.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent to ourselves the Faithful, as being the temples in which the Holy Ghost dwells.

II. PRELUDE.

Thou hast so many claims upon our hearts, O Spirit of Love and of Truth ! make them amenable to Thy divine guidance.

I. POINT.

The Holy Spirit dwells in our hearts.

The Spirit breatheth where He will. The Creator of our souls (that He has made in His own Likeness), the Spirit of God, visits them—abides in them—as in living temples which are dedicated to His honour and glory. He is not inactive within them, for desiring to communicate His Life of love, He manifests therein the greatness, the perfection of God : He makes them comprehend that they can never love the Sovereign Good, as He deserves to be loved ; but at the same time excites in them an always-increasing desire to love Him better, which desire, in itself, is ever augmenting

divine love. This is what Saints have proved, and are proving still.—The most intense earthly love cannot be compared with the love which has been—is awakened in their hearts for God. And yet we are so cold, so insensible : how is this ?—If our hearts were absolutely empty of mere human affection, we should find ourselves quite differently disposed towards God ; the tendencies of our hearts would be rectified. We testify our gratitude towards creatures, who may have claims to it, most gladly : our Creator overwhelms us with favours continually, and we seem actually reluctant even to appear grateful to Him. *How few are found to give glory to God* for all the benefits He bestows. He is within us, and yet the temple of our heart does not continually resound with His praises ; although we know that He is waiting to confer still greater favours, if we will only shew that we appreciate those already given.

II. POINT.

We owe a constant submission to the Holy Spirit.

Know you not that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? Yes ! but it may be that He will withdraw from the temple of our souls if we resist His operations therein ; if we abuse His gifts, if we neglect His inspirations, if we fail in gratitude. We surely have a desire (all too faint, perhaps) that the Spirit of Truth should abide with us for ever : we must then, on our parts, be true to Him and to ourselves, by proving, firstly—our docility to His teaching and grateful submission to His will : secondly—that we really distrust ourselves, through a humble sense of our natural weakness ; and really feel how entirely dependent we are on His help and guidance. It has been well said that “the Spirit of Love wills to reign in our hearts,

not serve". Let us be careful to refuse Him nothing, and remember that if our love co-operate with His, it will not be limited to the affections, but seek a wider field of action—the fulfilling of the Divine Will perfectly. We often admire the heroic virtues of the Martyrs and other Saints ; we have the same kind of admiration for those, whom we ourselves see accomplishing the duties of their vocation so thoroughly; practising every virtue and giving themselves up with extraordinary zeal to works of charity. And whence comes this fervour? this constancy? From divine love; which is ever increasing, and taking its direction from the Holy Spirit of God.

COLLOQUY.

O Loving Spirit, reign Thou in my heart absolutely: govern it according to Thy good pleasure. Come, and destroy all that in me displeases Thee. Come, and enkindle in my heart holy ardour. Come, and fill me with true zeal in the accomplishing of the duties of my vocation; for I desire to discharge them all, in the manner most pleasing to Thee. It is for Thee to command—for me to obey. Thou art ever the same, and I owe Thee my humble and grateful submission. May I always remember that Thou hast chosen me to be Thy dwelling-place.

RESOLUTION.

To abandon myself entirely to the direction of the Holy Spirit, in absolute dependence on His divine operations.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

He that abideth in charity, abideth in God, and God in him.

PRAYER.

O God, Who didst teach.

Octave of Pentecost.—Friday.**The Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit.**

They were all filled with the Holy Ghost.—ACTS II.

I. PRELUDE.

We can suppose that we are listening to the Apostles as they, inspired by the Holy Ghost, speak in divers languages, and publicly teach the people.

II. PRELUDE.

Divine Spirit, Source of the Seven-fold Gifts of grace, we beseech Thee to shed abroad in our souls these gifts in all their plenitude.

I. POINT.

The gifts of Counsel and of Knowledge.

Therefore hear ye the Counsel of the Lord. An infallible sign of the Presence of the Holy Spirit in souls, is the abundance of light which the Divine Guest diffuses; enabling them to apprehend and to appreciate His gifts. It is not only the Apostles and Prophets, but all the true children of God that the Holy Spirit enlightens by His bestowal of Counsel and of Knowledge. By the Gift of Counsel He converses with them as with a dear friend, to direct them and to point out the means they will have to take, in order to arrive at the possession of the Sovereign Good. Happy are the ears which hear not that which is spoken of in the world, but the Voice which speaks within. Happy are we if we are deaf to idle words, but are always

ready to listen to the divine whispers of the Paraclete. Happy, in fine, are we, if we love silence and recollection; we shall assuredly hear the Voice of the Spirit of Jesus talking to us. By the Gift of Knowledge, the Holy Ghost, like a wise Master, instructs us how to form a right judgment in all things—to appreciate the greatness of the Creator, and the littleness of creatures—to make account only of God, and of that which leads to Him.—*He teacheth man Knowledge.* Let us examine as to whether it is the Holy Ghost Who is actuating us, by seeing to which science we apply ourselves the most. What will profane knowledge avail us hereafter, if we shall have failed to bestow most pains on the acquirement of the Science of the Saints? We do well to remember that at the Last Day we shall not be asked what we have known, but what we have done; all will then appear to be vanity, save the love and service we have given to God.

II. POINT.

The Gift of Understanding and of Wisdom.

The words of Wisdom are right to those that understand. Let us consider further some of the luminous rays which the Holy Ghost sheds upon faithful souls. By the gift of Understanding He unfolds to them the secrets of His divine Mysteries; affording so clear and distinct an insight into them, that nothing is capable of disturbing their faith. The Spirit of God seems to declare the results of His action in these words: "They to whom I speak are quickly instructed, and make great progress in the spiritual life. It is I, Who in a moment can elevate a humble soul, and cause it to understand, and to advance in the contemplation of, eternal truths, better than they can who have studied for many

years in the school of human philosophy. I teach that all should be despised, and all forsaken, for love of Me." O Divine Spirit of Love, make us to experience how true are Thy words.—By the Gift of Wisdom He discovers to us, if we will, the sublimity of the following of the Cross—a doctrine so divine that it can be accepted only by pure and holy souls. "To suffer or to die," Saint Teresa said. "To suffer and be despised," repeated Saint John of the Cross; and these generous-hearted Martyrs of love, found more peace, more happiness in suffering, than they who are in the fullest enjoyment of this world's delights can ever attain. Heavenly Wisdom renders them happy who endure persecution. How inestimable are the gifts of the Spirit of God ! What marvellous effects they may produce in our souls ! what sanctity ! what perfection ! Oh ! that God may give to us the Spirit of Wisdom !

COLLOQUY.

Divine Spirit, be Thou my Teacher ! speak to my heart and my soul : counsel me, direct me. Henceforth I would listen only to Thy Voice, for inexpressible delight is found in conversing with Thee. Make me to understand more thoroughly the goodness of God, and that He alone merits my love. I know that in the Cross is salvation, but I often am so unwise as to avoid it, and try to put aside the bitter chalice of suffering. But come Thou to me to-day, with larger Gifts of Counsel and Knowledge—of Understanding and of Wisdom.

RESOLUTION.

By practising interior silence and recollection better, I will strive to hear more promptly the Voice of the Holy Spirit.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

The Wisdom of the Spirit is life and peace.

PRAYER.

O God, Who didst teach.

Octave of Pentecost.—Saturday.

The Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit.

They were all filled with the Holy Ghost.—ACTS II.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us suppose that we are listening to the Apostles, as they, inspired by the Holy Ghost, speak in divers languages, and teach the people.

II. PRELUDE.

Divine Spirit, Source of the Seven-fold Gifts of grace, we beseech Thee to shed abroad in our souls these gifts in all their plenitude.

I. POINT.

The Gifts of Holy Fear and of Piety.

*May we be filled with the Spirit of the Fear of the Lord—*that holy Fear which is compatible with the spirit of filial Love. We, like the children of a good father, should bear towards God that true affection which is increased rather than lessened by a fear of offending Him ; or of doing

anything that might tend to cast a shade upon His honour, which He confides to our keeping, and which should be so dear to us. As Saint Paul says : *We have not received the spirit of bondage again in fear : but we have received the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry : Father.* It is the Good Spirit that leads us therefore, and makes us worthy to be called the children of God. He will fill us with that happiness which the Gift of Piety causes one to enjoy, in the service of the Heavenly Father ; so that all which brings us into close and direct communication with Him, such as prayer—meditation—the partaking of the Holy Sacraments of the Church—will afford us the greatest spiritual delight. If we have received the spirit of Piety, our consolation, our joy, our hope will be centred in Jesus. It will make us desire to glorify Him in union with, and under the influence of, the Holy Ghost, for our Lord says : *He shall glorify Me because He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it to you.* Are we faithful to His pious inspirations ? Whilst we learn by them to love God as our Father, and Jesus as the Object of our tenderest devotion, do we pray constantly that the Blessed Spirit Himself may *lead us into all truth*, and discover to us more and more how to increase in real piety and holiness of living ?

II. POINT.

The Gift of Fortitude.

A soul possessed by the Spirit of God is full of love, so strong, that it is enabled courageously to accomplish all that the holy Will of God demands of it. If we are thus possessed, we shall find that we have in this love of God, the energy necessary for overcoming nature, and for helping us to forsake all, even ourselves, for God's Sake. We shall desire not only to labour with Jesus for the salvation of

souls, but also to suffer with Him. This supernatural strength is made perfect in our infirmity, the divine power shines forth more brightly in the midst of our human weakness. O Holy Spirit, Thou art our Strength ! without Thee we are feeble, cowardly, tepid—and it is an easy matter to vanquish us ; but with Thee we are strong, courageous—yes ! and still more—invincible. *In what day soever, we shall call upon Thee, hear us : Thou shalt multiply strength in our souls.* . . . Who then, having meditated upon the Seven-fold Gifts of the Holy Ghost, and the grace and light which He bestows upon the soul, can fail to desire more ardently that He may animate and direct us, and be the Source whence shall spring our every thought, and affection, and desire ? And as we have to-day meditated, O Holy Spirit, upon Thy Gifts of Holy Fear, and Piety, and Fortitude, so do Thou restrain us from all evil, increase our fervour in our religious exercises, and fortify us against the attacks of our enemies and our own weakness.

COLLOQUY.

O Mary, Spouse of the Holy Ghost, who didst receive in such abundance His most precious gifts, have compassion upon me, thy child, and obtain for me, by thy intercession, those special graces of which I stand the most in need. Thou didst correspond so faithfully to His inspirations, that thou wast worthy to become the Mother of our Saviour. By the remembrance of that mysterious hour when the *power of the Most High overshadowed thee*, and of the Day of Pentecost when He indicated by an emblematic sign that thou shouldst be the central Light—to attract and to illuminate souls—in His Holy Church, I beseech thee pray for me, that the Holy Spirit may ever dwell in me ; and make me to imitate thy own fidelity to His grace.

RESOLUTION.

More fervently and constantly to ask for the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, and a perfect docility to His inspirations.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

O Holy Ghost, replenish me with the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and fortitude, the spirit of knowledge and piety, and of holy fear.

PRAYER.

O God, Who didst teach.

Trinity Sunday.**The Mystery of the Most Holy Trinity.**

To the King of Ages, Immortal, Invisible, the only God, be honour and glory for ever and ever, amen.—I. S. TIMOTHY I.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent to ourselves the universe as a vast temple, raised to the glory of the Holy, Undivided Trinity: let us see the Angels, mankind, and all other creatures, rendering homage to God—the Mysterious Three in One.

II. PRELUDE.

Adorable Trinity, by Thy grace replenish us with purest love towards Thee; with most profound respect, and lively gratitude.

I. POINT.

The depth of the Mystery of the Holy Trinity.

This wonderful, most ancient Mystery is the foundation of all the other Mysteries of our religion ; all relate to it— all have been wrought out to heighten its glory. It is so profound, so sublime ; yet it has been revealed to man : and the holy Catholic Faith commands our belief in it. But to endeavour to sound its depth is, as Saint Augustine expresses it : “ to imitate a child who would try to hold the waters of the ocean in the hollow of its hand ”. Therefore we need not be astonished at our powerlessness to comprehend it : our very avowal that we are incapable of so doing, is an act of homage to Thy unspeakable greatness, O God : homage—not of words, but of reverent silence : homage—not of our being, but of our nothingness. We own that, before Thee, our bodily and intellectual powers—our life—are less than nothing, as we bow down before the Mystery of *the Unity that is to be worshiped in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity*. What tongue can publish its grandeur ? What mind can grasp its marvels ? Faith alone can uphold our thoughts as they contemplate it. This Mystery is lifted up so high above their reach that they, at best, cannot even wing their flight up to the lowest steps of the Throne of the Eternal, Incomprehensible, Uncreated God-in-Three-Persons. To catch a faint echo of the Angels’ Sanctus, as they touch the fringe of the veil of golden light which envelopes the Mystery of the Holy Trinity, is the farthest point to which our imagination can attain ; but as we bend in reverent awe, our Credo penetrates where human thought cannot follow.

II. POINT.

We must not only believe in the Triune God, but offer our tribute of praise.

The universe which contains the works of the Creator, is a vast temple consecrated to His glory. *I heard*, says Saint John, *every creature which is in Heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, saying : To Him that sitteth on the Throne, and to the Lamb, benediction and honour and glory and power for ever and ever.* If all creatures, animate and inanimate, in this our world, contribute according to their several abilities to the hymn of universal praise which is offered to God, should not man, the lord of nature, who bears the image of the Creator, and typically witnesses to the truth of the Divine Trinity by the testimony of *the spirit, the water and the blood*, be rendering to Him continual thanksgiving? for his understanding can at least appreciate the perfection of God's works—he can glorify Him intelligently. Are not all Christians under the highest of all obligations to love and adore the August Trinity? We are deceiving ourselves if we think our love for God can consist in a mere formal acknowledgment, that He is our Sovereign Lord; if our hearts are not attached wholly to Him, our prayers and acts of adoration have little value in His Sight. And we, who are especially consecrated to the work of magnifying the Adorable Trinity—let us not forget the holy engagement we are under of devoting our lives to the glory of God the Father—Who has created us and calls us His children; to the glory of God the Son—Who has redeemed us and owns us as His disciples; to the glory of God the Holy Ghost—Who sanctifies us, and Whose temples we are.

COLLOQUY.

O Sovereign Majesty, notwithstanding my weakness and inability to adore Thee as I ought, receive my homage of praise and thanksgiving, particularly on this day when the whole Church unites with the heavenly Hosts in saying: *Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was, and Who is, and Who is to come.* May a deeper reverence for the Mysterious Trinity in Unity be increased in me; and as I make the sign of the Cross, and invoke Thee—O Father, Thee—O Son, and Thee—O Holy Ghost, may this act of faith and of adoration be always worthy of Thy acceptance, O Blessed Trinity. May I henceforth more habitually do all things in that most Holy, most Wonderful Name.

RESOLUTION.

Often during the day to adore the Triune God, and do all things to His glory.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

PRAYER.

Our Father, and Hail Mary.

First Week after Pentecost.—Monday.

The Love we owe to the Three Divine Persons.

God is charity: Let us, therefore, love God, because God first loved us.—I. S. JOHN IV.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent to ourselves how God—the Father, God—the Son, and God—the Holy Ghost, are now looking down upon us with feelings of affection ; and how the Saints, in all ages, have reciprocated this love as far as they have been able.

II. PRELUDE.

Grant, O Holy Trinity, that knowing the innumerable claims Thou hast to our love, we may yield it all gladly to Thee.

I. POINT.

All that we have—all that we are, we owe to the Three Divine Persons of the Blessed Trinity.

The Creator, the Saviour, the Paraclete,—One God ! They form the Object of our adoration and love. The Name of Father, as it regards us, is a Name of purest affection, and shews how much He, Who created us, loves us. In whatever way we look at this divine Fatherhood, it is love which meets our view. Love actuated Him in giving us life : by love His Providence preserves and guides us : in predestinating, justifying, and hereafter glorifying us, who are called to be saints, is it not by love that He accomplishes His purposes ? What love can equal His, since *it moved Him to send His Son into the world to be the propitiation for our sins ?* Has He not a true claim to all the affection of our heart ? Whom should we love, if we love not our Heavenly Father ?—And God, the Son, gives us no less proof of His charity. We have seen Him descend from His Home of glory, and abase Himself by taking upon Him our human nature, in order to live in poverty—to suffer—

and to die in the midst of ignominy and cruel torments! So incomprehensible a charity demands in return, all the love which we are capable of giving.—And the Holy Spirit is that Spirit of Love which proceeds from the Father and the Son; and inspires us with charity towards God, and towards our neighbour—shedding it abroad in our hearts. How could we withhold our love from Him, Who Himself infuses this grace into our souls? What then must needs be the conclusion we draw from these considerations? We never can sufficiently love our God as we ought, but we must perseveringly endeavour to do so as much as we can.

II. POINT.

We must be holy, if we would truly love God.

To become worthy of rendering our homage of adoration and love to the Most Holy Trinity, not hereafter in Heaven only, but also now on earth, we must strive to imitate the sanctity of God Himself. *Be ye holy, because I, the Lord your God, am holy*, was the message sent through Moses to the children of Israel by God, the Father; and the Son of God says, in the Gospel: *Be ye therefore perfect, as also your Heavenly Father is perfect*. Holiness of life is the most practical, the most worthy acknowledgment of our reverence for the Most High God,—the best proof of love that we can offer to the Undivided Trinity. In the order of nature and of grace we are under eternal obligations to Each of the Three Divine Persons, we owe everything to Their respective and continual operations in us and for us. Our care should be not to thwart the designs of the Blessed Trinity in our regard, but to tend unceasingly towards Christian perfection. To glorify the Father, we have but to follow in all things the example

of His Beloved Son, Whose Life on earth was one unbroken chain of acts of adoration. The Holy Spirit is glorified by our docility to His inspirations, while He teaches us to glorify the Father and the Son. The unity of will and purpose in the Deity, is the foundation of our hope of attaining to holiness here, and everlasting happiness in the world to come.

COLLOQUY.

O Ever-blessed Trinity! the three powers of my soul tend towards Thee, in accordance with Thy all-wise intention. May they be strengthened to fulfil Thy purpose, so that the remembrance of Thee may be the chief and happiest record of my memory ;—the knowledge of Thee, the guiding light of my understanding ;—the love of Thee, the very life of my heart. Sanctify me in my body, soul and spirit, and thus enable me to offer Thee, O God, such acts of loving allegiance and adoration as may be pleasing to Thy Divine Majesty. Make me to strive after perfection, with this aim in view : to become worthy to offer Thee praise and glory everlastingly in Heaven.

RESOLUTION.

To acknowledge constantly my absolute dependence on the Most Holy Trinity ; to testify my love, and humbly adore.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

O Holy, Undivided Trinity, to Thee be glory for ever and ever.

PRAYER.

Our Father, and Hail Mary.

First Week after Pentecost.—Tuesday.

The Reverence we owe to the Holy Trinity.

The Lord is great in Zion, and high above all people: Let them give praise to His great Name: for it is terrible and holy.—PSALM XCVIII.

I. PRELUDE.

In considering in general the attributes of the Divinity, let us see in God supreme Power, to punish His enemies—sovereign Wisdom, to discover evil wherever they promote it—infinite Holiness, to counteract its effects.

II. PRELUDE.

Imprint in our souls, O All-powerful, All-wise, All-holy God, so deep a respect for Thy Divine Attributes, that we may most carefully avoid the smallest faults.

I. POINT.

The Attributes of the Three Divine Persons should inspire us with the fear of sin.

As, in the Trinity of the Persons of the Godhead there is an essential Unity, so the different divine Attributes, equally belong to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost: nevertheless, by a kind of appropriation, we ascribe to God the Father—Power, because He is the First Principle of all things: to God the Son—Wisdom, because He was begotten of the Father before all ages, in the perfection of all knowledge: to the Holy Ghost—Goodness, because He proceeds from the Father and the Son as the Divine Impersonation

of love. These Three Attributes of the Holy Trinity should inspire us with fear and reverence, as we consider that God is everywhere, that no one can withdraw from His Presence; it pervades the universe over which He has absolute dominion. Let us contemplate the power of God with relation to sin. There is not a creature, either animate or inanimate, of which He may not make use to avenge the affronts which the sinner offers Him. The power of God is not only almighty but eternal; therefore He may exert it to punish him in this life, and the undying flames of hell will perpetuate His vengeance for ever. The judgments of God are terrible: if, having bestowed on us so many graces, having waited for us to rid ourselves of our imperfections, He finds that we resist Him, that we persevere in our sins, our vices, then He will take away the graces He has given, and we shall inevitably fall into a worse state—that of indifference and neglect concerning our salvation, which will necessarily become endangered. Ungrateful and foolish that we are! of what are we dreaming when we insult the supreme Power of our God? Do we think to escape it? May the thought of it so affect us that we may fear to offend our Heavenly Father, and adoring His almighty Power, beg Him to shield us with it from all danger.

II. POINT.

Not merely the Power but also the Wisdom and Goodness of God should make us avoid sin.

We should be equally penetrated with a sense of reverence for the Son of God, by reason of His infinite Wisdom, which is omniscient. It reaches the depths of our heart and conscience: vain is our attempt to dissimulate: our hypocrisy cannot deceive it. The eye of Wisdom has

no need of extraneous light to discover what we strive to hide ; our hearts, our thoughts, are as an open book before it. God possesses not only the eye of Wisdom that sees all evil, and a hand of power to punish it, but a heart of perfect sanctity which cannot tolerate it. And herein we find that Divine Goodness, which should make us fear to sin. It is by reason of this attribute of the Holy Ghost that grief and remorse are experienced in the soul that has offended that same Blessed Spirit ; and why it remains in a state of unrest, until the offence be pardoned.—This wholesome alarm is an effect of the Goodness of God, and produces deeper respect and awe towards Him. One of the greatest graces He can accord us in this life, is His gift of holy Fear, whereby Christian vigilance is maintained, so that no unruly inclination nor affection may glide into the heart, without our perceiving, and correcting it.—What motive can be stronger to make us dread sin, or to deepen our reverence for the Divine Majesty, than the terrible truth that sin is so opposed to sanctity? that a single contravention of God's Law may be sufficient to annihilate all the merits of one even who has been His greatest friend?

COLLOQUY.

O Lord my God, most wonderful Thou art ! I humbly adore Thee ! How vast is Thy Power ! can it be possible that I ever try to resist it?—How deep is Thy Wisdom ! have I not vainly hoped to avoid its omniscience?—How unspeakable is Thy Goodness ! have I not cause to be confounded at the contrast between my sad imperfectness and its absolute perfection ? Adorable Trinity ! deign to bestow on me power—to conquer my weakness ; wisdom—to enlighten my ignorance ; holiness—to counteract my sinfulness. Often bring to my mind, such thoughts of Thy Divine Perfections, as may fill me with reverence and holy fear.

RESOLUTION.

Often to contemplate the Power, Wisdom, and Sanctity of the Holy Trinity.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and magnify Thy Name!

PRAYER.

Our Father, and Hail Mary.

First Week after Pentecost.—Wednesday.

Devotion towards the Holy Trinity.

There are Three in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: And these Three are One.—1. S. JOHN V.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us, in spirit, transport ourselves into Heaven, there to learn how to bless and praise the Most Holy Trinity: by listening to the sweet songs of adoration, with which the heavenly courts resound to the glory of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

II. PRELUDE.

Give us grace, O Holy, Undivided Trinity, to be replenished with purest love for Thee, with deepest respect, and lively gratitude.

I. POINT.

The fervour with which we ought to practise devotion towards the Holy Trinity.

All that we have meditated upon concerning this profound Mystery, ought to inspire us with a firm and loving devotion towards the August Trinity. Let us now consider these Three Divine Persons, in their essential Unity, as the Source of our personal holiness on earth, and the cause of our eternal beatitude in Heaven. If we would one day rejoice in the contemplation of Them there, we must sanctify ourselves on earth by really loving and serving Them. To this end the blessings and the effects of the merits of Jesus Christ, acquired for us, all tend. Our creation, redemption and sanctification, all speak of unity of divine action on the part of the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity, for the accomplishing of our salvation. *No man can come to Me, except the Father Who hath sent Me draw Him*, said the Divine Son of God; and afterwards he lays us under an interchange of this obligation, by the words, *No man cometh to the Father but by Me*. And it is the Blessed Spirit Who inspires us with the holy desire of approaching the Father, through the Son. The Father attracts us, so that we feel happy in humbly submitting ourselves to His Will; the Son invites us to dwell with Him, in His Oneness with the Father; the Holy Ghost counsels us to be faithful to His grace, and to be united by Him to the Father and the Son. Thus the Unity of the Godhead, and Its unity of purpose in our regard, is brought continually before our minds. And what higher theme could occupy our thoughts and affections? May nothing displace it, so that it may render us more worthy to love and adore the Holy Trinity.

II. POINT.

The most solid devotion towards the Holy Trinity consists in imitation of the Divine Perfections.

Since the most perfect religious act, according to the fathers, consists in imitating that which we honour, let us endeavour to understand how we can imitate the Blessed Trinity. Firstly : As the Father, whilst making himself known by means of the Word Whom He sent amongst men, yet retained Him within Himself, so should we, in going out into the duties and hallowed employments of our several vocations, keep ourselves enclosed within the sanctuary of the Presence of God. Secondly : From the correspondently perfect—mutual knowledge, of the Father and the Son, resulted a love as perfect, as it was, and is, eternal ; so should the clear insight God deigns to give us of Himself, produce in us a corresponding love. Thirdly : Although between the Three Divine Persons there is so great a difference, and They are distinguishable the One from the Other by Their respective characteristics and offices, there exists between Them, nevertheless, a perfect Union, so that *these Three are One*. In like manner, the bonds of perfect charity should unite us, the one with the other, whatever difference there may be in our characteristics, or employments. Fourthly : Since there is between the Divine Persons a perfect communicableness of glory, of perfection, and of possession, it is not sufficient that we should have for our neighbour, a sterile, inactive affection, but such true charity as will render us willing to give him some share in our temporal and spiritual advantages. Lastly : The Father being zealous for the glory of His Son, and the Son for the glory of the Father and of the Holy Spirit, we ought, in order to achieve in ourselves a

more entire likeness to the Godhead, to be ever animated with zeal for the glory of God and the honour of our neighbour, feeling most deeply any injury done to God, or to our brethren.

COLLOQUY.

O Most Holy Trinity, I ardently desire to glorify Thee with that true devotion by which Thou mayst be pleased and honoured. I wish to act constantly *in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*; consecrating my actions to my Heavenly Father, so that He may give me courage to overcome the difficulties which present themselves: to the Son, my Saviour, trusting that He will let me know what He is expecting of me: to the Holy Spirit, my Guide through life, that He may give me strength to fulfil the Will of God, out of love for Him.

RESOLUTION.

To put aside all mere human considerations: to have only in view the imitation of the Perfections, and the glory of the Divine Persons of the Holy Trinity.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

PRAYER.

Our Father, and Hail Mary.

Feast of Corpus Christi.

The Necessity of Holy Communion.

He that eateth My Flesh, and drinketh My Blood, hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the Last Day.—

S. JOHN VI.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent to ourselves Jesus Christ surrounded by a great crowd of people, who listen to His words.

II. PRELUDE.

Give us grace, O Lord Jesus, to be deeply impressed with the importance of this declaration, by which we are promised eternal life, if we duly receive Holy Communion.

I. POINT.

Jesus greatly desires that we receive the Sacrament of His Body and Blood.

Our Lord had so intense a desire to communicate Himself to us, by means of the Holy Eucharist, that He did, and said all He could, to induce us to be partakers of It. To the most pressing invitations He unites the most lofty promises; not only this, but His love fearing still that it might be resisted, He goes so far as to employ threats, pronouncing against such as obstinately reject the overtures of His merciful goodness these appalling words: *Amen, amen, I say unto you: Except ye eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His Blood, you shall not have life in you.* It is

impossible fully to comprehend the injury done to the Sacred Heart by the culpable blindness of so many souls, who entertain feelings of disrespect—perhaps even of disgust—towards the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar. And what bitter pain must they cause their Divine Spouse, who having been the recipients of His choicest graces, and having once understood the necessity of receiving Him into their hearts in Holy Communion, now absent themselves from His Holy Table—refusing to continue to impose upon themselves the sacrifices His love demands of them, in order rightly to prepare for this Heavenly Feast. Alas! as we read in the Imitation, “there are persons who are willing to put off their confession, and desire to defer their communion, lest they should be obliged thereby to keep a stricter watch over themselves”. Let us listen to, and ponder the sorrowful question our Dear Master put to His Apostles, when several of those who had been His disciples, displeased with His teaching on this profound Mystery, *went back, and walked no more with Him.*—*Will you also go away?* He asks of us to-day. The chief of the Apostles shall dictate our unanimous reply: *Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.*

II. POINT.

Jesus desires that we profit by the Holy Communions we make.

Our Blessed Lord calls us all to His Table; but He wills that we should approach It with holy sentiments, and that we should take great care to profit by the invaluable favours there offered us. The fruit that the Holy Communion should produce in us is, that it unite us to Jesus, and give us a perfect conformity to Him—of judgment, feeling, and

affection. They who frequently receive their God, hidden under the Eucharistic Veils, and who at the same time strive not to reproduce Him in their lives, by making them conformable to His divine Life, do not fulfil the end that our Lord had in view when instituting this Sacrament of Union and of Love. Are we not too often cold and insensible? having little fervour with regard to this Adorable Sacrament? His Real Presence therein has, perhaps, no more effect upon our hearts than upon the walls of the Church in which He dwells, because He does not find us rightly prepared to receive His Eucharistic benedictions. How comes this? What is there in us that hinders the operations of this Mystery of Love? Trifles—empty vanities—a mere nothing, perchance, which pre-occupies us. A miserable attachment to some created thing—to ourselves—deprives us of the marvellous effects which the Holy Sacrament would produce infallibly, were we better disposed. In this respect, why do we not imitate those Saints who have been such ardent lovers of Jesus in the Divine Eucharist? We should, as they did, labour strenuously to overcome our natural inclinations; and commit ourselves to the guidance of His Holy Spirit. We turn to Thee, O Lord, to ask pardon for our ingratitude; and to beg for strength to vanquish all indifference, irreverence, reluctance, and illusion, which may lessen our desire to receive Thee with due frequency, respect, and love.

COLLOQUY.

I adore Thee, O Jesus, as the only Life of my soul; and I thank Thee, to-day especially, that Thou dost permit me to witness, and take part in the devotion of Thy children towards the Blessed Sacrament. Notwithstanding my own unworthiness, in that I have so often forgotten the many

motives Thou hast Thyself given me, to secure my unvarying love and thankfulness, I ask Thee now to accept my homage of praise and adoration as I kneel before Thy Altar-throne. As I welcome Thee into my heart, may my faith, my hope, my love, be strengthened and increased, when I hear Thee saying to me : *I am the Bread of Life : he that eateth Me, the same also shall live by Me—and for ever.*

RESOLUTION.

To profit better by the reception of Holy Communion—seeking from Jesus grace to conform my life to His own, through the efficacy of His Eucharistic Love.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

I am the Bread of Life.

PRAYER.

Soul of Christ.

Octave of Corpus Christi.—Friday.

Love of Jesus for men, in the Divine Eucharist.

Having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them unto the end.—S. JOHN XIII.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us think of our Dear Lord, and the thoughts and feelings He entertained regarding mankind, as He instituted

the Blessed Sacrament ; which should be a bond of loving union between Himself and them.

II. PRELUDE.

Discover to us, more and more, the immensity of Thy love for us Thy own people, and give us grace duly to reciprocate it.

I. POINT.

The love of Jesus for men, induced Him to present them with a Gift of infinite value.

Jesus having loved His own, loved them unto the end. These words not only signify that Jesus loved those who called Him their Friend and Master during His sojourn on earth ; for His love being infinite, extends itself to all who own Him as such, even to the end of time—throughout eternity. No measurement of space, nor of time, can limit the boundlessness of the charity of our Lord. It is manifested in all His works, but it is especially in those which proclaim His love most clearly, that He is pleased to display the fulness of its power, the effects of its infinitude. *He loved them unto the end.* This is said of Jesus just at the time when this truth was about to be confirmed, by His bestowal of a gift to His Church which was the highest, the sweetest, the most precious, the most capable of ensuring the happiness of Her children, of inflaming their love, and of exciting their gratitude. Jesus was about to give Himself in the Divine Eucharist, so that earth might not be deprived of her Saviour, *even to the consummation of the world.* He, the God of all virtues, would dwell amongst men, and enter into their hearts to communicate to them holiness, strength, and the enjoyment of peace. Jesus was leaving His own to go

to meet death, for our salvation demanded the sacrifice of His Life; but His Sacred Heart *would not leave us orphans*. His profound wisdom invented the means of perpetuating His Presence in the midst of the children of men. After what manner? Without any appearance of majesty or power, so that none need fear to draw near to Him. What infinite bounty! what inscrutable wisdom! what profuseness of love! Are we consecrating all our love to Him in return?

II. POINT.

The love of Jesus for men is not weakened by their ingratitude.

He loved them unto the end. And the end will never come! The better to understand to what a degree Jesus has loved us, we have but to consider how unworthy man has proved himself to be of the most excellent Gift He has bestowed on him. Let us think a little of all that Jesus foreknew, with regard to man's ingratitude, at the very moment that He instituted the Sacrament of His Love. His own nation, who would not recognise Him as the Messiah, were about to put Him to death: one of His chosen Disciples would betray Him, and the rest would desert their Master:—later on, He saw all the sacrileges, and insults which would be committed against His Sacred Person, hidden beneath the Sacramental Veils: the isolation—the solitude in which He would be left in His own Temples; the coldness, the contempt of many hearts that would neither know Him, nor love Him. How strong must that love be, which so much ingratitude has been incapable of diminishing! Such love could only be found in the Heart of God! No created intelligence could ever

measure the height—the length—the depth of His universal, eternal charity. It is an abyss in which our thoughts lose themselves.

COLLOQUY.

O God of Love! *Deep calleth on deep*: the abyss of Thy goodness calleth on the abyss of my wretchedness, and nothingness. I am without virtue, without merits; but if Thou attractest me to Thyself, and withdrawest me into Thy Sacred Heart, I—having nothing—shall possess all things. In the Blessed Sacrament, Thy merits become my riches, Thy love my treasure; Thou givest Thyself to me, what more can I desire? Consume with the flames of Thy love all that there is in my heart which displeases Thee; so that it may become a pure Altar, whereon, self having been sacrificed, Thou mayst repose. Possess me entirely: let my life be merged in Thine.

RESOLUTION.

Generously to sacrifice to Jesus that which hinders His love from possessing my heart entirely.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Yea / I have loved thee with an everlasting love.

PRAYER.

Soul of Christ.

Octave of Corpus Christi.—Saturday.

Effects of the Divine Eucharist.

He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood abideth in Me and I in him : As the Living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father : so he that eateth Me, the same also shall live by Me.—S. JOHN VI.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us listen to Jesus saying to us from the Tabernacle:
He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood abideth in Me and I in Him.

II. PRELUDE.

Divine Jesus, help us always to make good and fervent Communion; so that Thou mayst dwell in us by Thy grace, and we may dwell in Thee, by our love and faithfulness.

I. POINT.

Holy Communion unites us to Jesus Christ.

Our Adorable Saviour, in giving Himself to us by means of Holy Communion, does not come into our hearts as a passer-by: He wills to dwell there, and He does dwell there if we preserve with care the effects of the Most Blessed Sacrament in our souls. The heart that has received Jesus, and remains united to Him in recollectedness and with fidelity, is a living Tabernacle in which He will abide with loving complacency: He converses sweetly with such a heart

and replenishes it with His favours. After Holy Communion we are so closely united to Him, that we actually live with His Life : it is He Who puts into us those virtues, that we afterwards produce in act ; as the sap in the stem of the tree communicates itself to the branches, causing them to bring forth fruit. *He that abideth in Me and I in him, the same beareth much fruit.* If we do not feel the effects of this wonderful union, it is because of some imperfection in ourselves. “If after Holy Communion,” says Saint Bonaventure, “you do not feel the effects of the spiritual Food you have eaten, it is a sign that your soul is sick, or that it is dead. You have put fire into your bosom, and not felt the heat of it : honey into your mouth, and not tasted its sweetness. We know but too well that we are full of evil passions and vices, which are spiritual ailments, destroying our relish for Holy Communion : they prevent our finding those celestial delights which we should discern, did we rightly dispose ourselves to approach the Table of our Lord. We ought therefore to have frequent recourse to humble, fervent prayer, in order to obtain purity of heart. This will produce in us peace, and tranquillity of soul ; and light also, to discover our errors—blindness—and the depths of our sinfulness : it will help us to observe and to repress the rebellions of nature against grace, and to correct all the disorder of our hearts. The knowledge of ourselves is the effect of purity of heart ; consequently also of humility, which necessarily promotes a longing to depend for life upon that *Living Bread which came down from Heaven.*”

II. POINT.

Holy Communion renders us conformable to Jesus Christ.

No earthly alliance can offer a comparison between itself

and the celestial union which Jesus deigns to ratify, each time we receive His Precious Body and Blood. Truly He is the Bridegroom of our souls! With what respect, with what love, with what holy joy ought they not to be filled, at the approach of these sweet moments which strengthen the bonds of that mystic union, that exists between our Lord and each true member of His beloved Church. *I in them:* and thus it is that we, even during this our earthly pilgrimage, know something of that blessed oneness, which is to be the cause of our glory and felicity in Heaven. Jesus now hides Himself within our hearts, never to leave them, if we at least will have it so: He imparts to us in all their comprehensiveness, the results of His Incarnation and His Death. These Mysteries of mercy and love he accomplished, to make us conformable to Himself by our union with Him, through partaking in His merits and imitating His virtues. He desires that each one of His children should glorify His Father, as He has Himself glorified Him: and this is why He reproduces Himself, so to speak, in ourselves, in order that we may be those *true adorers, who adore God in spirit and in truth.* Let us not raise any obstacle to the fulfilment of the longings of the Heart of Jesus; but casting aside tepidity, advance in the practice of virtue,—in doing which we shall best show our appreciation of His infinite goodness, in instituting this Sacrament of Love.

COLLOQUY.

O my Saviour, I prostrate myself at Thy Feet, and offer Thee my homage of adoration, love, and gratitude,—which is indeed justly due to Thee. I deplore the frequent languidness of my aspirations; and I beseech Thee to give me those longing desires for Holy Communion which are

so agreeable to Thee, and which prepare my soul to receive Thee more worthily. May I, by these means, grow in conformity to Thyself, so that in my life and conversation I may glorify God.

RESOLUTION.

To combat diligently my predominant fault, in order to be better disposed for Holy Communion.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

I in them.

PRAYER.

Soul of Christ.

Octave of Corpus Christi.—Sunday.**Refusal of the Invitation to the Great Supper.**

JESUS said : A certain man made a great supper, and invited many : And he sent his servant at the hour of supper to say to them that were invited that they should come, for now all things are ready : And they all at once began to make excuse. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant : Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor and the feeble, and the blind and the lame : go into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled : But I say unto

you, that none of those men that were invited shall taste of my supper.—S. LUKE XIV.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us imagine to ourselves Jesus sitting at table in the Pharisee's house, into which he had entered to eat bread, and to speak a parable to the assembled guests.

II. PRELUDE.

Grant, O Lord, that accepting the invitations of Thy grace, we may merit to attain eternal happiness.

I. POINT.

The unhappiness of such as do not respond to the call of Jesus.

A certain man made a great supper, and invited many. To this already-prepared banquet (which is the enjoyment of eternal bliss) all men are invited; but a great number refuse to be present at it. Oh! how unwise and ungrateful are they who thus resist the advances God makes, in His great goodness! Some have energy and eagerness only in the acquisition of an earthly fortune, or in the pursuit of honours: some again give themselves up unreservedly to worldly pleasures: others allow themselves to be mastered by cowardice and sloth, or to languish in indifference: all such are forgetting the end of their creation—their salvation. Death does not, however, forget to make them his prey; sooner or later he strikes them down, and they find themselves excluded for ever from the heavenly Feast—that unending happiness which Jesus has so lovingly, condescendingly prepared for them. O God, preserve us from

acting so foolishly ! Grace having hitherto preserved in us a desire after celestial things, and prevented our hearts from being domineered over by those grosser passions which would have hardened them, we, nevertheless, do well to remember that great disorders have had little beginnings, and that we should not cease to repress every repugnance and reluctance, which might end in prompting us to refuse an invitation, sent by the Good Master of the House. . . . We may consider the Holy Eucharist also as a Sacred Banquet prepared for us by God, Who has sent His Own Son to invite guests to partake of it. This Adorable Son has taken upon Himself the form of a servant, and has gone forth from His Father's House to invite all men to His Holy Table ; but the number of those who accept His invitations is small. And we !—we who have faith in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar—are we really touched by the consideration of the marvellous results produced by It ? Who can tell the effects on a pure soul, of one single Communion ? God only knows the eternal consequences of an invitation refused. He only likewise knows the eternal consequences of an invitation accepted.

II. POINT.

The strong desire manifested by our Lord to entertain us at His Table.

Then the Master of the House, being angry, said to his servant : Go out quickly, and bring in hither the poor and the feeble, and the blind and the lame : Compel them to come in that my house may be filled. Resistance to grace on the part even of the many, hinders not the accomplishment of the designs of God. If some, unhappily for themselves, reject His benefits, He makes choice of other souls who

will prove more faithful ; making up by their fidelity for the want of it in others, and these will take the places which had been prepared for those, in Heaven. This momentous truth Thou dost, O Lord, call to our minds to-day, to excite us to enter into Thy all-wise purposes—to do Thy bidding—to make good use of every opportunity Thou affordest us of drawing near to Thyself—to partake of every means of grace. And thou teachest us that none need lose courage, or think they will be rejected. *Yet there is room*—for the most imperfect, the most feeble : for those who have wandered into the highway of open failure in duty, or who have lingered beneath the hedge-row of some less obvious defects, the door of mercy which leads to our Father's House is open, and Jesus is calling such to enter within the gates of Zion, ere it be too late.

COLLOQUY.

O Lord, I ask pardon for the many times that I have resisted Thy loving invitations ; and I beseech Thee to give me grace to go with a glad and willing heart, whenever Thou dost call me to be a guest at Thy Eucharistic Feast. Feed me, all imperfect though I am, with Thy Most Precious Body and Blood ; and fortified thereby in my death-hour, may I hear Thee bidding me come to Thy Father's House, to participate in the endless delights of that eternal Home. *Blessed are they that are called to the Marriage-Supper of the Lamb.* Thanks be to Thee, O God, for having invited me.

RESOLUTION.

Faithfully to follow the inspirations of grace.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Blessed are they that are called to the Marriage-Supper of the Lamb.

PRAYER.

Soul of Christ.

Octave of Corpus Christi.—Monday.**The Hidden Life of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist.**

Verily Thou art a Hidden God.—ISAIAH XLV.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us, each one for himself, imagine that we are alone with Jesus; allured by Him into a region of quiet recollection, that He may give us some of His valuable instructions on the Hidden Life.

II. PRELUDE.

Divine Jesus, do not Thou refuse to bestow upon us any of those sublime virtues, with which Thou art wont to favour souls that are dearest to Thee.

I. POINT.

In what the hidden life consists, of which Jesus, in the Holy Eucharist, is the Master and Model.

Who would say, in considering Jesus hidden under the lowly appearances of Bread and Wine, that He is the Same God Who directs and governs the heavens, and the earth—Angels and men—in fine, the whole of creation? Of this grand, marvellous exercise of His power and wisdom nothing therein appears. His Eucharistic Life is that of silence—humility—patience—obscurity: it is a secret condition of life which He has adopted to teach us also to love unostentation, silence, and solitude. “Let us,” as Saint Francis de Sales says, “apply ourselves with simplicity and humility to those apparently lesser virtues of which our Lord sets the example. He has himself attached importance to patience—kindness towards others—calmness in bearing with their imperfections—every-day mortifications—little acts of humility—obedience—and above all to the constant, imperceptible combat against our natural impatience; these are the virtues, these are the pearls, with which we should adorn our souls. Let us leave super-eminent virtues to those whose greatness of soul raises them far above ourselves: we do not merit so high a rank in the House of God; but should only be too happy to find ourselves amongst the number of His under-servants.” Little virtues—hidden virtues—are agreeable to our Divine King, He observes the least of His servants who practises them. And He does not regulate His rewards according to the dignity and elevation of those who serve Him; but takes chiefly into account their humility. The actuating principle of the hidden life is that interior spirit, which is not moved (as it were) by chance, nor by human motives; but which, in all things, has God in view;—that spirit which judges not by appearances, but by what is real: considering all that is not the Will of God to be vanity and nothingness, it seeks not to do great things, but little things well. This spirit arises from pure love of God, takes that

same love as its guide, and desires no other recompense.—
O God, Thou alone canst lay the foundation of this truly
hidden, spiritual life, and assist us in building it up.

II. POINT.

The exercise of the hidden life.

Faithful souls, who have undertaken to imitate the hidden Life of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist, and who, by the practice of love for Him, have banished from their heart all affection for the world, love to hide from the world the operations of this interior spirit. If we possess it, we shall not be subject to illusion ; nor impelled to withdraw from the duties imposed on us by Divine Providence ; but whilst submitting to the laws of charity and obedience, we shall, nevertheless, love silence and solitude ; and shun, as far as may be, all that may tend to disturb our peace of mind. We shall also be on our guard to prevent human motives from gliding into our actions, and spoiling them of their ingenuousness. We shall desire no other witness of our acts of virtue, and of our afflictions, but God : renouncing all the vain consolation of creatures, we shall hide from them (unless under special circumstances) our spiritual joys, our secret trials. We shall speak of the virtues which have a peculiar attraction for us, with those only who can help us to practise them more perfectly—and, in general, we shall simply leave self out of our conversation. The results of the hidden life are most precious. Firstly : it is a sure and easy means of obtaining great purity of heart ; and entire detachment from this world, and from one's self. Secondly : peace and repose accompany it everywhere. Thirdly : it produces the spirit of prayer, and union with God. Fourthly : spiritual comfort and divine

favours are usually the reward our Lord bestows on those who imitate His hidden Life in the Tabernacle.

COLLOQUY.

O my Saviour, I adore Thee in the Holy Eucharist as the Master and the Model of the spiritual life ! Make me to comprehend Thy divine teaching, and give to me the spirit of recollection, prayer, and humility ; so that I may imitate Thy hidden Life, and participate in the intimate union that Thou dost not disdain to contract with those, who are seeking only to be known and praised by Thee, their Heavenly Spouse.

RESOLUTION.

Often to retire within myself, and speak alone with Jesus.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

The Kingdom of God is within you.

PRAYER.

O Jesus, living in Mary.

Octave of Corpus Christi.—Tuesday.

The Active Life of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist.

Come to Me, all you that labour, and are burdened, and I will refresh you.—S. MATT. XI.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent to ourselves Jesus Christ assisting, and refreshing with words of power and consolation, those who labour in His cause.

II. PRELUDE.

Divine Jesus, fill us with ardent zeal in Thy service, and in the promoting of Thy glory : may we use all our powers in making Thee better known, and better loved.

I. POINT.

The results of the active Life of Jesus in the Adorable Eucharist.

The glory of His Father and the salvation of souls are the two great motives, which retain our Lord amongst us in the Blessed Sacrament. From the silent Tabernacle, where He has fixed His Abode, He governs and directs His Church by the authority of His Presence there : at the Holy Table He feeds *the people of His pasture, the sheep of His Hand* : He is the Master, the Physician, the Protector of souls that belong to Him. He is our Master—in that He educates us His children ; leading us step by step in the path of wisdom and true knowledge. He is our Physician—since He attends with loving care to the diseases and infirmities of our souls, and renews their wasted powers : even dying souls he revivifies by His sacramental grace : tempering in a fatherly manner, His threatening justice with His promises of mercy, He triumphs over the powers of the destroyer, and gives back life, and health, and vigour. *Come*, He seems to say, *unto Me*, and listen to My silent promptings — counsels — admonitions — encouragement —

approval : and then go back to your work for to-day, with renewed zeal and strength. Yes ! He shares in our toil, our difficulties, our active service : He sympathises with us in our weariness and disappointments ; He sends us forth to our daily labours and combats, and then welcomes us back again to the Home of His Sacramental Presence.

II. POINT.

Means of participating in the active Life of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist.

The grandeur of God's works, both in nature and grace, is produced noiselessly ; being accomplished by a power, strong in its divine silence, unseen in its operations, but sure in its results. What a wondrous power of activity emanates from the quiet Tabernacle ! Thence come the thoughts, counsels, and strong resolves which set in motion the spiritual forces of both heart and mind, and make us to co-operate with Him Who dwelleth there. The work of each of us may vary, but the end in view is the same : *There are diversities of ministries, but the same Lord.* To some are given the ministry of the Holy Word of God, the administration of the Sacraments, and the directing of souls, by means of the inherent powers of Holy Church. Some again have a work to do for God in the midst of the world ; and who would be able to accomplish this, without the assistance derived from Jesus in the Adorable Eucharist ? The work of governing, of teaching, of converting, of using the influence of authority or position : the work of the hands—of the intellect—of the understanding—every kind of manual or mental work may be sanctified—may become a ceaseless act of prayer.—Some of the greatest Saints have

been most practical : at the foot of the Altar they have learned how, like their Master during His public Ministry, *to go about, doing good*. His secret Life in our Churches is the epitome of His mortal Life ; offering examples which will be comprehended by the spiritual-minded, but which, alas ! are as a sealed book to many Christians. In the following of these divine examples of virtue ourselves, we may help them to open and read the mysteries of the hidden life ; by the visible effects of these mysteries in our lives, we can edify them, and glorify God.

COLLOQUY.

I adore Thee, O Jesus, in the Sacrament of Thy Love, veiled beneath which Thou dwellest continually amongst us, to procure the glory of the Heavenly Father, and the salvation of souls. To Thee will I have recourse in all my needs, knowing that near Thine Altar I shall obtain help and encouragement in the discharge of my active duties. My life being hidden in Thee, and my actions shaped after the example Thou hast given me during Thy mortal Life, may I evidence the powerful effects of Thy Eucharistic Presence.

RESOLUTION.

To offer to God my prayers and my actions, for the salvation of souls.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

He shall give peace unto His people, and unto His saints.

PRAYER.

Soul of Christ.

Octave of Corpus Christi.—Wednesday.

The Victorious Life of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist.

Surely, His Salvation is near to them that fear Him: that glory may dwell in our land.—PSALM LXXXIV.

I. PRELUDE.

Having thought of the Hidden and the Active Life of Jesus in the Tabernacle, let us to-day consider the victories He there achieves.

II. PRELUDE.

We offer ourselves, O Lord, to Thee, at the foot of Thy Holy Altar, for the accomplishing of Thy loving designs on ourselves and others; permit us thus to assist Thee in overcoming the enemies of our salvation.

I. POINT.

In the Holy Eucharist Jesus conquers souls, and destroys in them self-will.

The love which Jesus enkindles in souls, and maintains by His sacramental grace, is so powerful, that it renders them capable, notwithstanding their natural weakness, to overthrow their most terrible enemies. What glorious triumphs have been won by multitudes of Martyrs and Confessors, in every age, and in every condition of life! What heroic traits of patience, charity, obedience, mortification, and hatred of self, has not the Church witnessed in her children!

It is impossible to contemplate without admiration their courage, their meekness, their joy in the midst of long, and cruel persecution—of painful maladies—of continual temptations. Whence has it arisen that feeble creatures have lost all feeling of compassion for themselves? all repugnance for the most painful acts of mortification? It has been in Holy Communion that they have gained so much force—that power which is the power of love. If we love our Saviour, we shall understand how to glorify Him, and show a practical appreciation of His sweet charity—by a constant renunciation of our will, to follow His in all points—by gradually effecting a more complete ruin of self-esteem we shall make sure of victory; and be enabled to lay our trophies at the footstool of our Hidden God, as we praise Him for every triumph won, through the power of the Holy Eucharist.

II. POINT.

Jesus raises souls, by the power of His love, to a participation in His Divinity.

Souls are transformed by the grace of the Communion of the Precious Body and Blood of their Lord. And what wonder! for they live a natural life no longer, *but Christ liveth in them*. Thus even before we are delivered from the infirmities of this corruptible body, it is possible—it is required of us—that we lead a heavenly life, since we are partakers of the divine Life of our Lord. In our exterior behaviour there ought to be, therefore, angelic modesty, unvarying affability, quiet prudence, and unostentatious, genuine acts of piety. And within! *The Kingdom of God is within you*: the Kingdom of Light, and Strength illimitable. A faithful soul becomes the throne of Divine Love.

Are we not already obliged, in all humility, to look out of ourselves by the force of these considerations, and think of those Saints—Saint Clare, Saint Catherine, Saint Francis Xavier, and many others—who have been enriched with such treasures of grace ; for they can, more adequately, give us an idea of what the union of Jesus, with His Spouses in Holy Communion, can effect ; how He elevates their souls above their infirmities and downward tendencies, to a state so perfect, that they are already, on earth, *partakers of that glory which is to be revealed in time to come.* In *My Father's House there are many mansions* : we may not be destined to fill the first ranks in glory, yet we are required to promote the designs of God in our regard ; and to attain to that degree of perfection to which His grace will lead us on, if we *abide in His love.* Let us question ourselves concerning our self-abnegation—our contempt of the world—our fidelity to the grace of sacramental union with our Lord. How far do we permit Him to triumph in our hearts ? What has He not a right to expect of us, after so many visits from Him ?

COLLOQUY.

O Jesus, the Author of all sanctity, kneeling at Thy Feet, I deplore the opposition Thou hast often found in my heart to the designs of Thy love. How unworthy is this, in one whom Thou hast so favoured ! May I help Thee to banish from my heart and mind that pertinacious enemy—self. Increase in me the power of Thy love, each time I receive Thee in Holy Communion ; so that by Thy strength I may triumph in Thy cause, and win victories for Thee.

RESOLUTION.

To promote the glory of God, by victories gained in the strength of my union with Jesus.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Be strengthened in the Lord, and in the might of His power.

PRAYER.

Soul of Christ.

Octave of Corpus Christi.—Thursday.

The Eucharist is the Source of spiritual gifts.

The Bread that I will give is My Flesh, for the life of the world.—S. JOHN VI.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent to ourselves Jesus Christ dwelling in the Tabernacle ; and thence ceaselessly bestowing on us His abundant blessings.

II. PRELUDE.

O Jesus, Source of all holiness, replenish us with a great esteem for the Sacrament of the Altar : may we count ourselves most happy in receiving the gifts Thou dost there bestow.

. I. POINT.

The Eucharist renders the worship paid by the Church to God, divine ; and animates the piety of the faithful.

The Holy Eucharist gives to Christian souls a value which is infinite, and a character which is divine ; a prerogative

that no other religion has ever—can ever claim. By means of the Eucharist, the One Holy Catholic Church presents to Her God homage worthy of Him. She offers Him His Beloved Son, Who is equal to the Father ; Who has a right to ask—and to obtain all for which He pleads on our behalf : it is not the Church alone that offers prayer, and praise, and sacrifice,—Jesus Christ unites in Her acts of supplication and thanksgiving, and is Himself both Priest and Sacrifice. Hence a true proportion is maintained between Catholic worship and its Divine Object ; between God and the acknowledgment of our allegiance. On the one side supreme majesty and strict justice—on the other abasement, and infinite satisfaction ; or (as it has been said by a pious author) “on the one side, wonderful gifts, and still more wonderful promises—and on the other, acts of praise and thanksgiving, which equal in dignity the benefits bestowed. What a source of glory for God ! what an unexhaustible treasury of graces for the Church ! The Eucharist is the divine bond, uniting earth and Heaven : it animates and sustains piety in the Church. It enkindles fervour ; it inspires sometimes fear, sometimes compunction, always confidence and love. It puts into our hearts such sentiments, as render us agreeable to the Most High. Take away the Eucharist, and soon, very soon, piety decays ; souls become barren, and worship becomes nothing more than a repetition of cold and lifeless ceremonies.” We know and we feel that the Divine Son of Mary is there, upon the Altar, in Person. Before Him we present ourselves—to Him we offer our acts of adoration.

II. POINT.

The Eucharist is the source of those shining virtues which adorn the Church.

The Eucharist promotes true, fraternal charity, and is the most powerful bond of unity. At the Altar all the Faithful are nourished by the same Bread—the Bread of Love; before the reception of which they lay aside the recollection of injuries, and pray that they may be forgiven, even as they forgive. There can be no place for hatred, resentment, unkindness, or coldness, amongst those who are reunited before the Altar of God, in the Presence of Jesus—the Friend of all whom His love has gathered together. The love which existed between the early Christians called forth the admiration of the pagans; was it not because they—being fed at the same Holy Table, with the Divine Manna—proved by their fraternal charity the effects it produced in their hearts and lives? And so it should still be with us. They who observe us should be convinced by the unflinching charity of our discourse, and our actions, that *we have been with Jesus*.—It is charity, and its accompanying virtues of humility, peaceableness, gentleness, firmness, and truth, that form the crown of honour and glory which adorns the Church of the Living God. By means of the Holy Eucharist we are living members of Jesus Christ, alive with His Life, in divine union with Him and with the Saints; and when we reach Heaven, it will be because we have accepted as true those words of our Lord, which are the key-stone of the Catholic Faith: *He that eateth My Flesh, and drinketh My Blood, hath everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.*

COLLOQUY.

Thanks be to Thee, O Jesus, the Holy Eucharist will ever be the strength of the Church, according to Thy promise: *Behold I am with you all days.* By It may I, who have consecrated myself to the service of God and His Holy

Church, be protected: by It may I be succoured in the hour of trial and temptation; by It may I be fortified in my last struggle with the enemy of my salvation, and so pass into Thy visible Presence, according to Thy word: *If any man eat of the Bread of Life, he shall live for ever.*

RESOLUTION.

To make frequent acts of spiritual Communion to-day, in thanksgiving for the Divine Gift of the Eucharist.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

He that eateth Me, the same also shall live by Me.

PRAYER.

Soul of Christ.

Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Devotion to the Sacred Heart.

I have loved thee with an everlasting love.—JER. XXXIII.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent to ourselves how Jesus appeared in a vision, in order to make known to His Church the loving desires of His Sacred Heart. He discovers It to us: pierced—surmounted by a cross—surrounded with flames—and encircled by a crown of thorns.

II. PRELUDE.

Sacred Heart of our Beloved Lord, teach us how to venerate thee ; and inspire us with those sentiments which will render our hearts pleasing to thee.

I. POINT.

The motives which induced Jesus to manifest the sentiments and desires of His Divine Heart.

For what reason is it that Jesus has miraculously made known His Will, in these latter days, that His Divine Heart should be honoured with a special devotion ? It is because He desires that His faithful ones, by their homage of adoration, love, and zeal, should make reparation for the terrible ingratitude of those who for so many centuries have disdained His love and favour. "Is it possible," says Saint Liguori, "truly to love Jesus Christ—to know of the love He has borne towards mankind—of all He has suffered to save them—of the desire He has for their salvation, and to remain indifferent to the unhappiness of that multitude of souls, who are the slaves of sin ? or to cease to implore the divine Mercy that they may be enlightened, and strengthened to quit their miserable condition ?" Our Dear Lord wills that His true disciples, being touched by the injuries He receives, should offer to His Sacred Heart the tribute of their love and of their sympathy. Considering the evils with which the world is inundated, and that so very many souls are exposed to perish in this universal deluge, Jesus has offered His Sacred Heart as the Ark of Refuge, which receives all that consent to enter therein. All are invited : to sinners It affords an asylum, where they are safe from the wrath to come : to the just It is a place of repose and of

true enjoyment : to such as are pursued by their enemies, It provides a sure retreat wherein they may gather up new strength : to all, in fine, It offers spiritual weapons in their combats—remedies for the diseases of the soul—assistance in the hour of weakness—consolation in times of affliction and of weariness. O Saviour of sinners, what charity is Thine ! how great is the goodness of Thy Sacred Heart !

II. POINT.

In what our devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus ought to consist.

Since in disclosing to us the mysteries of His Loving Heart, our Lord declares that He would have us make reparation for the ingratitude of so many of His creatures, let us enter fully into His wishes, by an increase in the fervour of our devotion, at this time. To effect this increase, we should re-animate our love for Jesus Christ, really present in the Holy Tabernacle, by remembering the numberless benefits of His tender charity—that charity which causes Him to live in the midst of us, to give Himself to us ; and as a consequence, all His graces—His merits—His perfections. Ought not our hearts to be ready therefore, to prove the most lively gratitude and sincere affection towards the Centre of that divine Love which He entertains for each one of us ? To repair the outrages He receives in the Sacrament of His Love, let us humble ourselves to the very dust before Him ; and weep over the insensibility of so many thankless Christians. We may well strive to augment our zeal for His glory, and to employ all our strength in winning hearts for Him : thus shall we best prove our devotion to the Sacred Heart, Which so bitterly complained that It found so few true lovers.—And while we

make amends for the wrongs done to It, we will offer our hearts once more to Jesus, begging Him to have, and to hold for ever, absolute sway over them.

COLLOQUY.

O Adorable Heart, I would that all hearts should, on this day, be united to adore Thee and to thank Thee, for the ineffable Gift Thou hast made us of Thyself. At least permit me to gain more for Thee—by my acts of reparation—by my prayers—by my speaking of Thy goodness and Thy love—by making known Thy greatness, Thy perfections. Once again receive my own heart, O Jesus; it is all Thine; preserve it from evil, and grant that by being united to Thine own Heart, it may become more entirely conformed to It, in all things pertaining to virtue and sanctity.

RESOLUTION.

To employ this day in rendering continual acts of adoration to the Heart of Jesus: imposing on myself some interior mortifications in reparation for the many injuries done to It.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

I have given thee my Heart as a pledge of My love: give Me thine in return.

PRAYER.

O Loving Jesus.

Second Week after Pentecost.—Saturday.

The Love of the Sacred Heart for men.

My child, give Me thy heart.—PROVERBS XXIII.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us look at our Lord, as He deigns to shew us His Divine Heart, from out of which arise flames of Love.

II. PRELUDE.

O Divine Heart, all burning with love for us, communicate to our hearts Thy sacred fire; so that they may be consumed for the glory of God.

I. POINT.

How immense is the love of the Heart of the God-Man for us all.

As the heart is the seat of all feelings of affection, Jesus has willed—by means of our contemplating this sensible Object, on which we may fix our hearts—to enable us to comprehend the boundlessness of the love He entertains for us; and to induce us to render love for love. Let us consider how that we are the beloved ones of our Saviour. But who can measure the height, the depth, the greatness of this divine love? Jesus puts no limits to His proofs of it. He proves it not merely in the order of nature, but willing to raise us up to Himself, He abased Himself to our level, took upon Him our nature in the Incarnation—sanctified it

by communicating to it His Life, graces, and merits,—and subjected Himself to its necessities and its hardships for love of us. He was born, He lived, He died in the midst of poverty, humiliations, and sufferings, to make it easier for us to live as He did ; and so to follow Him in the way towards Heaven which He has opened for us at so great a cost to Himself. And even here He stays not His merciful love. Passing up to His Throne on high, He yet perpetuates His Presence in His Church on earth.—From time to time He specially reveals Himself to His Saints, and lifts that veil which hides Him from our sight. One day He found a faithful soul, to whom He made known the secrets of His Heart ; and bade her give His message of love and of gentle reproach to Christians living in these later times. Through her He would remind His children that no length of time could weaken the pulsations of that divine, yet human Heart, beating with love—intense—unchangeable—undying. Well may we thank and praise Him, for the demand we hear Him make again to each of us to-day : *My child, give Me thy heart*, for I—thy God—desire to claim its best affections, and enshrine them within My Own Heart.

II. POINT.

Our love should correspond to that of the Heart of Jesus.

The Apostle Saint Paul, having sounded the abyss of the love of the Divine Heart exclaims : *Who then shall separate us from the love of Christ ? shall tribulation ? or distress ? or famine ? or nakedness ? or danger ? or persecution ? or the sword ? I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor might, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in*

Christ Jesus our Lord. Such are the consequences of divine Love ; it produces love in our hearts, and draws them to itself : it gives to them holy courage, making them prompt to undertake much and endure much, in return ; out of truest gratitude. If then love is to be repaid by Love, if the Sacred Heart is given in exchange for our poor hearts, what may not Jesus expect from us ? Are we disappointing Him ? Are we keeping back ever so little of our affections, to bestow on some worthless favourite ? perhaps on that most worthless of all—self ? Is this possible, as the soft, low pleadings of the Divine Heart make themselves heard to-day ? We can make it impossible for the future, by asking Jesus to render our love like that of Saint Paul—ardent, strong, and generous. Labour, fatigue, privations, feed the holy flame of love ; so let us never again recoil before any sacrifice which we are prompted to offer to the Sacred Heart. What sacrifices has It not made for each of us ?

COLLOQUY.

O Jesus, deign to communicate to me the holy, generous sentiments of Thy Heart. In giving it to me, Thou dost justly claim my own. Ah ! Lord Jesus, it is so imperfect, so cold, so variable : it is not worth Thy acceptance : but since Thou dost ask me for it, how can I refuse it ? Take full possession of it, so that it may become somewhat similar to Thine Own. I know that this is what Thou dost desire, and that every beating of my heart may be in unison with those of Thy ever-Loving Heart.

RESOLUTION.

To sacrifice to the Heart of Jesus all that may hinder mine from becoming like to His.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Give Me Thy Heart.

PRAYER.

O Loving Jesus.

Third Week after Pentecost.—Sunday.

Jesus is the Shepherd of our souls.

The Son of Man is come to save that which was lost : If a man have a hundred sheep, and one of them should go astray, doth he not leave the ninety-nine in the mountains and goeth to seek that which is gone astray ? And if so be that he find it, Amen, I say unto you, he rejoiceth more for that, than for the ninety-nine which went not astray.—S. MATT. XVIII.

I. PRELUDE.

We imagine that we see the Divine Master surrounded by His Disciples. We join their company, and listen to the words prompted by the love of the Sacred Heart for them, and for us.

II. PRELUDE.

O Jesus, the Shepherd of our souls, make us to comprehend the love of Thy Sacred Heart for us ; and that Thou dost expect us to exercise charity towards those who go astray from Thee.

I. POINT.

The charity of the Divine Heart of Jesus towards sinners.

Having found it, He lays it on His Shoulders, rejoicing. And He calls on us and the Angels to be glad with Him, saying : *Rejoice with Me because I have found My sheep that was lost.* The Good Shepherd receives the straying sheep back again ; and treats it with gentleness. He does not complain of the trouble it has caused Him : touched by the condition of weakness and depression in which he finds it, He is full of compassion and gladness. The sheep is worn out with its long wandering : how can it get back to the fold ? The Good Shepherd spares it all further fatigue, taking it on His Shoulders, He brings it home. He is truly the Saviour of souls : He, Who is the eternal joy of the Blessed, rejoices Himself at the conversion of a sinner. And He adds : *there shall be joy before the Angels of God upon one sinner doing penance.* Thou dost set an example of holy joy, O Jesus, and it is followed by the inhabitants of Heaven : and on earth the Church rejoices likewise. Is it not in, and by Thy Good Spirit that the Hosts in glory live and act ? as also the Priests of Thy Church, and all Her faithful members. How great a truth is this, how consoling both for the just and the repentant sinner ! And so the injunction is fulfilled : *Rejoice with them that rejoice*, in its highest sense : we with Jesus, and with the Angels and Saints—and they with us.

II. POINT.

In our zeal for the conversion of sinners, we should take the Heart of Jesus as our Model.

Zeal for the conversion of sinners is most worthy of a

religious soul, and highly conducive to God's glory. A sinner converted from his evil ways will praise and glorify Him throughout eternity ; whereas he might have cursed His Creator, in a state of never-ending despair. Is not this thought sufficient to make our life a life of ceaseless entreaty for those who are daily approaching eternal ruin ? Of all the works of mercy, none can be greater than that of withdrawing a soul from the dominion of the devil—to assist in restoring it to the liberty of the children of God. Yes ! sinners claim our first care—our highest sacrifices—our most earnest prayers. For want of these they may perish, and we may have to bear their reproaches hereafter. If we possess the Spirit and the virtues of Jesus Christ, we shall be moved to do all we can to obtain their conversion. Let us think only on what He has done for us : *Christ died for our sins, the Just for the unjust.* So shall we employ every means which true charity can suggest, and active zeal work out. Can encouragement go farther than it does in the words of Saint James : *He who causeth a sinner to be converted from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins ?* To persuade, to conjure, to edify, and above all to invoke the mercy of God, our Father—the Divine Master of all hearts—these are the means in our power. We should give ourselves no rest ; but persevere in offering our prayers and our sacrifices, until we have gained our point. If we act thus we shall be imitating the Good Shepherd ; and repaying Him in some degree for having sought us out, and made us *to hear His Voice and to follow Him.*

COLLOQUY.

When I think, O my Saviour, of Thy great mercy in having placed me within Thy Fold, I can but confess my utter

unworthiness ; and consider how I can prove my gratitude for Thy goodness in my regard. I will strive to be more faithful to Thy love, and to take part more actively in the work of recovering Thy lost sheep ; that Thou mayest be glorified and Thy Kingdom advanced. Accept my prayers and good works, which I offer to Thy Sacred Heart in this intention.—Whether I see the fruits of my labour, or not, let the consciousness that Thou wilt not refuse them, be my reward and consolation here,—whilst I wait for the day when I shall rejoice with all the redeemed in the Kingdom of eternal security.

RESOLUTION.

Constantly to offer the merits of Jesus Christ to the Eternal Father, for the conversion of sinners.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

The Son of Man is come to save that which was lost.

PRAYER.

Our Father and Hail Mary.

Third Week after Pentecost.—Monday.

Effects of devotion to the Sacred Heart.

In that day there shall be a Fountain open.—ZACHARIAS XIII.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent to ourselves the Heart of Jesus, opened

by a lance, inviting all men to draw thence the graces of salvation.

II. PRELUDE.

O Sacred Heart ! Thou invitest us so tenderly to apply to Thee in all our needs : grant that by our confidence and fervour, we may have the happiness of participating in those abundant graces of which Thou art the Source.

I. POINT.

We do not sufficiently appreciate the fulness of God's grace, flowing to us through the Sacred Heart of His Beloved Son.

A better understanding of what Jesus in His love has obtained for us, from His Heavenly Father, and of what He desires yet to do for us, is that which we should seek for, at this special time of devotion to the Sacred Heart. It seems gently to reproach us for remaining so far off ; for turning away with indifference from It, although It is the Fountain of grace which is open to all. And why is It open ? that the waters of grace may be wasted ? are they to flow in vain ? Oh, no ! they are ever issuing forth to refresh the weary—to revive the faint-hearted—to strengthen the weak—to cleanse the sinful—to fructify the virtues of the just. If we did but know—fully appreciate this Gift of God, we should not pass it by ; but have recourse to It continually, and not to avail ourselves of Its streams of grace on our own behalf only ; we should beg that It might overflow in the direction of those, who have not yet learned the efficacy of their cleansing and refreshing power. “Behold the Heart Which has loved men so much, and Which is loved by them so little,” we hear our Lord still saying to us to-day ; and yet has He

not promised that “sinners shall find It to be an ocean of mercy,” and that It shall shed Its love abundantly on all who shall honour It, or cause it to be honoured?

II. POINT.

Jesus asks us to go to Him in all our afflictions and necessities.

When our Adorable Saviour invites us to go to Him, whatever may be our misery or grief, it is not to leave us helplessly in our dejected condition, but in order to change our weakness into strength, our vices into virtues. The Fountain of Mercy is open to all. *All you that thirst come to the waters*: come you that are just—come you that are sinners—but come especially, you that are afflicted and mourn. None are excluded, none are forgotten in the invitation of our Dear Saviour. All will be admitted within the charmed circle of His love and favour, where life is restored to the spiritually dead—courage to souls half vanquished by their enemies—animation to those whom tepidity has cast down.—Most happy are the influences which the Heart of Jesus has over those hearts that are true in their devotion towards It. It is the Heart of our God, and *God is Charity*: and he that abideth in Charity, abideth in God, and God in him. The effect produced in our hearts then, by the influence of the Divine Heart, is love,—that pure stream, which flowing from the celestial Fountain, fills us with Its living waters.—Because of their life-giving power it is, that Confessors are courageous, Martyrs undaunted, Apostles zealous, Virgins pure, and all the Saints rich in merits, and worthy of their immortal crown. Let us therefore often have recourse to the Source of all holiness and perfection—often go to the Heart of Jesus.

COLLOQUY.

O Divine Heart, Source of all perfections and all graces, Thou has not discovered Thyself to me that I should remain insensible to Thy love, but rather that I should render myself worthy to participate in those same graces and perfections. Thou hast made known to me, O Jesus, Thy promises in favour of those who revere Thy Sacred Heart. I beseech of Thee to cleanse and renew my heart in the pure water of life, which flows from It; so that I may be prepared to praise for all eternity Thy mercy and Thy love.

RESOLUTION.

To have recourse to the Sacred Heart, as to an open Fountain of grace and mercy.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

If thou didst know the Gift of God.

PRAYER.

O Loving Jesus.

Third Week after Pentecost.—Tuesday.

Effects of the Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life. . . . If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his Cross and follow Me.—S. JOHN XIV. ; S. MATT. XVI.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent our Lord saying these words : the manner in which He says them, marks their importance.

II. PRELUDE.

O Divine Heart, we adore Thee as the Life of our hearts: may we love the Truth Thou dost teach us ; and follow in the Way in which Thou dost direct us.

I. POINT.

The Heart of Jesus inspires us with a desire to die to ourselves, and to love the Cross. *Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and so to enter into His Glory?* said our Saviour. And this is still the language of the Sacred Heart, to the faithful soul that is to be formed to true holiness. Often Jesus presents Himself to this favoured soul, carrying His Cross—toiling up to the summit of Mount Calvary, falling under the Wood of the Sacrifice—expiring in the midst of cruel torments—and He says : My child, *I am the Way*: thou must follow Me, and in My Death find life. We must share in the Saviour's labours, and sufferings, in order to participate in His triumph and His glory. These labours—these sufferings—consist in the continual immolation of nature, with all its tendencies,—through them we find the true way which leads to the immortal and glorious life. O Divine Heart, speak to our hearts, and give to them a right understanding, and practical love of the renouncing of self. The doctrine of the Cross which was *to the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Gentiles foolishness*, is still that which men so little comprehend. In those who bear the name of Christians, we find reason bowing itself down before the Mystery

of the Son of God dying to save them ; but that they should be associated in this same wonderful Sacrifice by dying to themselves, to their passions, to their own will and desires—this goes beyond the comprehension of the greater number : the bare proposition of it causes them to exclaim, with the renegade disciples at Capharnaum : *This saying is hard, who can bear it ?* And yet it must be heard and followed, for on it our salvation depends. Heaven and earth were separated, and the Cross re-united them : it is from the foot of the Cross that we rise upwards in heart and soul. To the Cross therefore let us cling : while here below let us find in it both strength and consolation. When in his Fatherly goodness God sends us some trial, let us say with Saint Andrew : “ O sweet Cross ! so long time wished for, now made ready for my soul, which has so ardently desired it ”. All the Saints have experienced this longing, and spoken after this manner ; finding in suffering a peace and happiness, which they whom the world deems happy, never find.

II. POINT.

The true lovers of the Sacred Heart are necessarily crucified with Jesus.

If in the world a good son shares in the sorrows of his father, and a wife in the misfortunes of her husband, if maternal love counts as nothing the fatigues and sufferings imposed on it, what desire is not felt by grateful, religious souls, to be permitted to be united—by crucifixion even—to the Best of fathers, to the Dearest of friends ? To suffer for Him is their joy—to resemble Him an indispensable necessity to their hearts : they feel that they must share in His Chalice and His Cross. Are these the feelings of our hearts ? Are we, as yet, willing only to be with Jesus on Mount

Thabor?—leaving Him alone perhaps on Mount Calvary? Do we fear to suffer? and to impose on ourselves some sacrifice for God? If it be so, well may we blush to be called the spouses of the Lamb, the disciples of the Crucified. Studying henceforth the Heart of Jesus more diligently, let us conform our sentiments to Its sentiments, and make Its desires the oracle, by which we frame our conduct. Nature—at the sight of the Cross and the humiliations which accompany it—shudders; but heedless of her appeals for pity—unintimidated by her cries, we must lead her to the Altar where our Well-Beloved consummated His Sacrifice; and there with the lance of love, immolate the victim—pride—vanity—dissipation—self-will—or any other unruly passion: then, dying to self, and living but for our Lord, we shall assure to ourselves the eternal recompense to be awarded hereafter by Him, Who from the height of Heaven witnesses our sacrifice.

COLLOQUY.

O my Saviour, in studying Thy Divine Heart I understand the teaching of the sacred symbols presented to my view:—the Cross by which It is surmounted—the Thorns which encircle It. These tell me that I must gladly consent to be hedged around with trials and vexations; that Thy Cross must be planted in my heart, and bring forth fruitful desires of self-sacrifice, and of sharing in the suffering Thou dost ask me to bear, for Thy sake.

RESOLUTION.

In the spirit of sacrifice to immolate the tendency—the passion—I have hitherto favoured.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

He that shall lose his life for Me, shall find it.

PRAYER.

O Loving Jesus.

Third Week after Pentecost.—Wednesday.

The Heart of Jesus is open to all men.

My delights were to be with the children of men.—PROVERBS
VIII.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us transport ourselves to Calvary, and there see the Body of Jesus fastened to the Cross. Jesus is dead: a soldier pierces His Sacred Heart.

II. PRELUDE.

Divine Jesus, grant that, understanding the Mystery of Thy Heart being opened by the lance, we may fly therein, in compliance with Thine own desires that we should make It a place of refuge and security.

I. POINT.

The lance is the key which has opened the Heart of our Lord, and shown us that we may enter therein.

The whole life of our Adorable Saviour had been employed in giving proofs to men of His infinite love. His gentleness towards sinners—His tender compassion for every form of human misery—leave no doubt of His sentiments with regard to us. Nevertheless, as if He feared that we might fail to understand to what a degree He loved us, He willed that after His Death, a lance should open His Heart, to discover—to offer to all men this sacred Tabernacle; as a place of security—of repose—of heavenly peace. He had, ages before, prophetically declared that *they should look on Him Whom they have pierced*; and now this is verified, in that He caused the soldier's lance to fulfil His Will, and to give to mankind an entrance into that mysterious Abode of purest Love. What a peculiar significance there is, in this apparently unpremeditated act on the part of the Roman soldier! It was the love of God for us which directed his hand. He who had leaned on Jesus' Bosom the night before, was looking on, and He now drank in a yet deeper draught of love from the Heart of his Dear Master. We see the impression made on his own heart and memory by this incident, for in his Gospel he enlarges upon it with peculiar carefulness: *He that saw the Side of Jesus opened with the Spear, hath given testimony: and his testimony is true: and He knoweth that he saith true: that you also may believe.* The Scripture saith, continues Saint John, *they shall look on Him Whom they pierced.* May we look indeed, again and again, at the open Side of Jesus,—may we be as impressed by the consideration of the piercing of the Sacred Heart, as was the Apostle of Love: looking within It, may we too learn lessons of love—and strive, as he did by his words and deeds of charity, to draw souls to look now at Jesus on Mount Calvary, where His compassion and mercy towards sinners is so wonderfully manifested, so that they may not

hereafter be heard calling on *the mountains and rocks to fall on them, and hide them from the face of Him that sitteth upon the throne*. Oh, that the hearts of all men would yield their affections to the all-loving Heart of their Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ !

II. POINT.

The Divine Heart changes not.

The Heart of Jesus is not like the hearts of men. These are inconstant in their affections, they weary of loving the same object, their sentiments vary with varying circumstances : but the love of Jesus is always the same. He is ever the faithful Friend—the tender Father—the generous Benefactor. He has first loved us, and will love us to the end. Not our sinfulness, which cannot be hidden from Him—not our ingratitude, which afflicts His Heart—not our obstinate resistance to His proffered grace—not all this can diminish His ardent Charity. It was not without a mysterious meaning that He received the spear-thrust after He had expired. Wounds imprinted on a dead body will not close. Our sins inflicted those wounds on the Precious Body of the Son of Mary, which caused Him mortal Suffering and Death ; but the painless Wound in the Sacred Heart was inflicted in accordance with the divine Will ; so that the very Sanctuary of Love might be opened, and be the ever accessible hiding-place of all contrite, loving souls. *Abide in My love*—enter into My Heart : our Lord says to such. If you love repose, It is the house of peace : if you will mature your good desires, It is the nest of the dove : if you love seclusion, It is the abode of the solitary sparrow : if you would weep tears of penitence, It is there that you will hear the responsive sighs of holy love : if you are athirst, It is

the fountain of living water. *Abide then in My love*, during your earthly sojourn, thankfully—perseveringly—confidingly; so will you be deemed worthy to abide therein eternally in the realms of unending bliss.

COLLOQUY.

O Sanctuary of boundless Charity ! Thou art ever open to those who would enter by means of sincere repentance, true love, and lively gratitude. For how long a time hast Thou been waiting for me ! I will place my heart—my life—within the Divine Heart; with the firm intention never to withdraw it again, back into my own keeping. Therein let me hide it : give me help to respond to the gracious invitation : *Abide in My Love*. Thus may I also glorify the Heavenly Father, together with the Beloved Son.

RESOLUTION.

Within the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and in conformity with Him, to perform all my actions this day.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Abide in My Love.

PRAYER.

O Loving Jesus.

Third Week after Pentecost.—Thursday.

The sufferings of the Heart of Jesus.

Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends.—S. JOHN XV.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us dwell upon the thought that all the sufferings our Lord endured, were centred in His Divine Heart.

II. PRELUDE.

O Saviour Jesus, make us to understand what bitter pangs our ingratitude has cost Thy Heart ; so that, full of regret and thankfulness, we may be henceforth Its joy and consolation.

I. POINT.

Jesus willed that His Divine Heart should be wounded, to give us a clearer idea of His suffering love.

We are touched at the recital of all that the Sacred Body of our Lord had to endure during His Life, and especially during the hours of the Passion ; but His exterior Sufferings were not the most painful. What words could ever give the faintest conception of the agony borne by the Divine Heart ? All the bitterness of His afflictions was concentrated there. Imagine, if it be possible, what It must have endured when those words were verified : *Even the man of My peace, in whom I trusted, who ate My bread, hath greatly supplanted Me ?* What must Jesus have suffered in the

depths of His Heart when *all the Disciples scandalised in His regard, leaving Him, fled away?* when Peter thrice denied Him? when the sword of sorrow passed through His Mother's soul? when the cry was wrung from His Lips: *My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?* And yet there was an anguish beyond all this! That which His Heart experienced, from the fore-knowledge that the greater number of those for whom It was to be pierced, would refuse to be cleansed and saved, by the Water and the Blood It was about to shed. Oh, what grief for the Divine Heart! who can fathom its depths? And has It not to-day the same cause to continue Its sorrowing over those who are so insensible to Its attractions, so untouched by Its compassionating goodness? Love holds It as a Captive within the Tabernacle, but how few pay any attention to Its claims. For is not the love of the Sacred Heart to a great degree unknown—forgotten—outraged even? If we reckon ourselves amongst those who are consecrated to Its service, should we not be continually repairing, by our acts of adoration, by our zeal, by our willingness to suffer, the wrongs done to It?—We have ourselves been guilty of, at least, much indifference and forgetfulness: this thought should make us desirous of participating, in some degree, in all that It has endured of humiliation and grief.

II. POINT.

It is for the sake of His faithful ones that Jesus is still exposed to contempt.

Although our Loving Saviour foresaw that by the wickedness of men His Divine Heart would in the future, be subjected to reproach and insult, yet He instituted the Holy Eucharist because He would not deprive His faithful

children of Its many graces. For them He remains, and will remain, until the end of time, the Victim of divine Love. This perpetual example of self-sacrifice should be an additional motive to incite us to console the Sacred Heart, by our devotion and by our spirit of sacrifice. How frequent should be our visits to the Blessed Sacrament ! how fervent our Communions ! What joy should we feel if, in the accomplishment of our daily duties, opportunities are given us of proclaiming the perfections of the Divine Heart, of extending devotion towards It. If still keeping the example It offers us before our eyes, we are patient and forgiving under trials and injuries, we shall also be filled with holy courage ; and maintain peace of soul in the midst even of the most violent assaults of our enemies. Faith will secure our perseverance, if aided by unfading hope and practical charity ; that lively faith which renders us fearless *to endure, as seeing Him Who is Invisible.*

COLLOQUY.

O Sacred Heart ! deign to accept the due reparation I desire to make Thee, for all the faults committed against Thy love ; and those particularly with which I must reproach myself. Henceforth I will honour Thee better, and to the utmost of my power, procure Thee greater honour. Like Thee may I be a victim of pure charity ; ready to endure contempt, and to do good to them that may injure me, out of love for Thee. O Jesus, give me grace thus to become a true apostle of Thy Sacred Heart, and to make known Its perfections.

RESOLUTION.

To go several times to-day, at least in thought, before the Tabernacle ; to make an act of reparation to the Sacred Heart for the ingratitude of our hearts.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

*Behold this Heart, Which has loved men so much, and
Which is loved by them so little !*

PRAYER.

O Loving Jesus.

Third Week after Pentecost.—Friday.

The gentleness and humility of Jesus.

Learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart.—
S. MATT. XI.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent to ourselves the Heart of Jesus as an open book, and the Divine Master saying to us : All wisdom, all knowledge, all virtues are contained within My Heart.

II. PRELUDE.

We beseech Thee, O God, to give us light and grace to know, to love, and to imitate the Divine Model of all true hearts.

I. POINT.

The Heart of Jesus is for us a divine study ;—from It we learn all that is necessary for our perfection.

When the Saviour lived amongst men, He instructed them

by His discourses : now His Divine Heart speaks to us and teaches us in an inexpressible manner, how we may become filled with Its spirit of love, and conform ourselves to Its sentiments, imitating Its virtues. “Let us thoroughly understand,” says Saint Francis de Sales, “what it is that Jesus Christ wishes us to learn of Him. For it is one of the greatest snares of the enemy, to amuse souls with the idea of virtue, without coming to the practice of it. In fact, how many there are who have the language, air, and appearance of piety, but who examine not their real sentiments ; if they are put to the test, they think and act in a manner opposed to the virtues of our Divine Master. It is incredible how poor and blind we are !” We, the privileged disciples of our Lord, should surely draw near Him, to study His excellence, His perfection ; letting this study be so practical that it produce in us, as it has done in the Saints, an ever-increasing resemblance to our Divine Model.—In contemplating the Sacred Heart, we see Its tender love in the Good Shepherd, Who has given His Life for His sheep ; and carries back on His Shoulders those who have again wandered from beside Him.—We see Its meekness and patience in the Lamb, Who has borne our iniquities ; and kept silence when suffering on our account.—We see Its purity and holiness, for in the God-Man there could be no spot of sin, no imperfection : His enemies even, could not pretend to discover one.—We see Its goodness and mercy, in the Physician of our souls, which are the object of His deepest solicitude : He heals their diseases, and raises them from the death of sin. How manifold are Thy perfections, O Sacred Heart !

II. POINT.

Learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart.

The prophet Isaias, wishing to make a portrait of the Messias, depicts in striking words the charms of His gentleness and His humility. *He shall not cry, nor have respect to person, neither shall His Voice be heard abroad ! the bruised reed He shall not break, and the smoking flax He shall not quench, He shall not be sad, nor troublesome.* Such was the gentleness of the Sacred Heart, that neither the uncouth manners of His Disciples, nor their ignorance, nor their defects, were capable of diminishing it for a moment. With what condescension their Divine Master accommodated Himself to their weakness ! with what goodness He reprehended and instructed them ! And at the present moment how does He bear with those who are indifferent—injurious—impious even ; waiting that they may repent. Again we may borrow for our consideration the words of Saint Francis de Sales : “The Divine Heart of Jesus,” he says, “recommends to us two virtues which are very dear to Him : humility, and meekness. It is as if He would, by the love of these virtues, consecrate our hearts to His service, and to the imitating of His Life. Humility perfects man in his duties towards God ; and meekness perfects him in his duties towards his neighbour. When humility is real, and meekness sincere, they form an excellent preservative against the feeling of pride, and hastiness of temper, which injuries received are so apt to awaken in us. But if, after being stung by the detracting tongue, or wronged in any way, our sensibility is aroused, our angry passions become inflamed, this is an unmistakable sign that our humility and our meekness are neither true, nor sincere ; but artificial, and outside show, only. The holy patriarch Joseph, the type of the Saviour, in sending his brothers back again from Egypt to their father’s house, gave them this advice : *Be not angry in the way.*” The Sacred Heart seems to speak the same

words in our ears. This life being but a journey that we have to make to reach Heaven, let us not give occasion of pain one to the other by the way; but be united in a true spirit of charity and peace. This would be to practise the divine injunction: *Learn of Me*—imitate Me—follow My example, *because I am meek and humble of heart.*

COLLOQUY.

O meek and humble Heart, what holy impressions Thou dost make upon the soul! But at the same time that Thy perfections charm me, they cause me to see the many imperfections and defects of my poor heart. How far from resembling Thee it must be, when the least vexation ruffles, the slightest suffering agitates, it. Alas! my disquietude, susceptibility, and hasty words prove to me that I often act in opposition to Thy teaching and example. Would that Thou didst so rule my heart, that Thy love might live, and act, and speak in me.

RESOLUTION.

To keep my attention fixed on the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart, and you shall find rest to your souls.

PRAYER.

O Loving Jesus.

Third Week after Pentecost.—Saturday.

Jesus preaches His Gospel.

From that time JESUS began to preach : And His fame went abroad.—S. MATT IV.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent to ourselves the Divine Saviour in the midst of the people, instructing them. The noble majesty of His bearing, and the charm of His condescending manner gained their hearts.

II. PRELUDE.

Grant, O Good Master, that in listening to Thy divine instructions, we may learn how to direct our zeal, for Thy honour and glory.

I. POINT.

Jesus—the Wisdom of the Father—instructs mankind. With what attention we should receive His teaching.

What is man that Thou art mindful of him ? Do we understand the dignity of having the Son of God for our Master ? the Infinite Wisdom for our Preceptor ? The Eternal Light has come in person to dispel the darkness of our ignorance ; to make us know our divine origin, our sublime destinies, and the way which leads to sovereign happiness. The mercy of God, and the dignity of the soul of man, appear side by side, as we contemplate the Incarnate Wisdom going into the towns and villages of Judea—under-

taking these journeys, at the cost of so much labour—to teach the way of salvation. Wishing to renovate mankind, to form a holy people for Himself, He preached a heavenly doctrine ; which gathered up into itself the old Law and the grand precept of love: thus comprehending all true religion, with its worship, its maxims, its virtues. The zeal of Jesus Christ during His public Ministry, shows us the importance of His mission of proclaiming the good tidings of salvation : it would doubtless have carried Him beyond the limits of the Holy Land, had not the Will of the Heavenly Father detained Him there. *I am come to cast fire on the earth, and what will I but that it be kindled ?* How ungrateful are we, if we do not feel a lively sense of thankfulness and love towards a Master so good, so generous, so devoted ? What if we are depriving our Saviour of the fruits of His labours ? and our souls of the precious benefits He has procured for them ?

II. POINT.

We must allow ourselves to be guided according to the doctrine and spirit of our Master.

The doctrine of Jesus Christ contains principally four things that we should adopt—in theory and practice. We must have the same sentiments as He ; the same affections ; the same principles of action ; and exercise ourselves in the same virtues: thus must be formed the chief characteristics of the true disciples of our Lord. To have the same sentiments as He, is to judge of things as He did. Jesus Christ judged that true greatness consisted in humility ; and that the shortest and surest way of attaining it, was by means of humiliations :—that the happiness of a true Christian is to be found in suffering ; and that such a

one is never so perfectly contented as when enduring something, in the cause of justice :—that to be really happy and rich, we must be detached from the riches and pleasures of this world :—that whosoever hateth and loseth his life shall save it :—that the Kingdom of Heaven will be taken by those who do violence to themselves. Are these indeed our sentiments? Without self-flattery or dissimulation, let us sound our hearts. If they do not reprehend us, then we may hope that we are true disciples of Jesus. But if His sentiments are not ours, it is in vain that we imagine we have the Spirit of the Son of God, or *that we are walking worthy of the vocation in which we are called*; since we have not the same affections, the same motives, the same virtues as our Divine Master. As regards ourselves, has His teaching been in vain? Happy those souls that have caught the spirit of Jesus! They have found a hidden treasure of ineffable value,—having found that, they have found all.

COLLOQUY.

Spirit of Love! which animated Jesus during His evangelical career, come Thou and fill me with zeal in the service of my Master, and a right judgment in all things. In examining the motives which actuate me and the affections of my heart, I see how widely they differ from His.—I flatter myself too often that I have learned the lessons Thou didst teach, O Lord, when on earth; but I have not learned them thoroughly. I find that I am still under the influence of worldly maxims; that I avoid humiliation, while professing an admiration for humility. Give me grace to be more consistent, and to practise what I know to be in accordance with Thy divine teaching.

RESOLUTION.

I will strive to participate in the devotedness of my Dear Master, by really practising what He has taught.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

To you it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of God.

PRAYER.

Our Father and Hail Mary.

Fourth Week after Pentecost.—Sunday.

Jesus teaches the people from Simon Peter's ship.

The multitudes pressed upon JESUS to hear the Word of God, as He stood by the Lake of Genesareth. He saw two ships standing by the lake: He, going into one which was Simon's, desired him to draw back a little from the land: And sitting, He taught the multitudes out of the ship: And when He had ceased speaking, He said to Simon: let down your nets for a draught: Simon said: Master, we have laboured all night and have taken nothing, but at Thy word I will let down the net: And they enclosed a very great multitude of fishes.—S. LUKE v.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent to ourselves our Saviour, surrounded by

a multitude of people. The major part of them are poor and rude : they press upon Him, so that to speak to them all at the same time, He finds it expedient to enter Simon's boat.

II. PRELUDE.

O Jesus, grant that like thee, we may love to be of service to the poor, and the ignorant ; remembering that all souls are equally dear in Thy Sight.

I. POINT.

Seeing Jesus thus surrounded, teaches us to love all men : each one possesses an immortal soul, to save or to lose.

It was for the most part the common people who followed Jesus, as *He went about doing good*. He received them with kindness, permitted them to approach Him—to touch Him ; they literally pressed upon Him to hear His words. He did not complain ; but as on the occasion which we have now brought before our minds, the better to instruct all, He placed Himself at their disposal, and entered a boat so that He might be seen and heard. How the humility, and simple condescension of our Lord Jesus Christ, confound all hardness, all repugnance in dealing with the poor ; and that disdainful pride which ignores their claims on us, as children of the same Heavenly Father. The most abject, the most repulsive, the most disease-stricken, may in His Sight, be more pleasing than we ; and in His Kingdom may hereafter be nearer to His Throne. Their simple faith often merits for them God's favour, which we lose by our lack of it. Uniting therefore our sentiments with those of the compassionate Heart of Jesus, let us feel and show kindness, and tenderness for the unfortunate, the ignorant, the poor, the

afflicted in body and mind, because they are His suffering members; respecting them as such, and as *our fellow-heirs, of the same Body, and co-partners of God's promise in Jesus Christ by the Gospel.*

II. POINT.

After having preached to the people, Jesus manifested His approval of the docility and obedience of the Fisherman, about to be called to be an Apostle.

We may consider Simon Peter, on this occasion, to be a figure of those who look to God alone, as the unerring Director of all their actions; trusting in Him to prosper their undertakings and to *give the increase.* Jesus would teach them, who were now to become His favoured Apostles, some more difficult lessons than those which He had taught the multitude. He took advantage of the past night's ill-success, and their legitimate desire of obtaining a draught of fishes, to prove that all real success can come only from Him; that human aid of itself avails nothing; and that the ordinary duties of life may be productive of great results, if done in obedience to God's command; by our leaving the issue in His Hands, Who can make all things—either success or apparent ill-success—*work together unto good, to such as, according to His purpose, are called to be saints.* The first thing that our Adorable Master asks of those who have the desire to labour in good earnest for their salvation, and to make progress in perfection is, that they forego mere natural dependence on creatures, or on their own efforts, however laudable they may seem to be. Often past experience, painfully gained perhaps, renders us more willing to admit that earthly attachments can afford no lasting peace: that they

often prove deceptive, and that the efforts which we intend should lead to some worldly advantage, are often in vain.

Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which doth not satisfy you ? is the first questioning doubt God would raise in our minds about the unreality of earthly good—earthly affections—after He has expressed His desire that we go straight to Him for strength and enlightenment, for guidance and security. We may well suppose that our Lord taught the multitudes that *if they would enter into life they must keep the commandments of God*, as He also now teaches all Christians : to the Apostles He said, as He always says to those whom He calls to a life of closer union with Himself : *If you will be perfect, leave all, and come, follow Me.*

COLLOQUY.

O Lord, Thou desirest that all may come to the knowledge of Thee, and practise Thy commandments ; so that all may be saved. But Thou dost open up the way of perfection before those whom, in Thy all-wise purposes, Thou dost call to follow Thy Beloved Son, even as He called Simon Peter and his companions ; to leave their friends, their ships, their nets and *all things*, and go after Him. O Jesus, I thank Thee that Thou hast also shown me the vanity of all earthly things, and hast attracted me by the power of Thy love, into the narrow path which leads me after Thee. It is the way of the Cross, but I see Thy Foot-prints and may not turn back.—Keep me in it, by Thy grace, O Jesus.

RESOLUTION.

To purify my intention before each one of my daily actions.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

So we, being many, are one body in Christ.

PRAYER.

Our Father, and Hail Mary.

Fourth Week after Pentecost.—Monday.

Jesus directs Simon Peter and his companions to move the boat further from the shore.

When Jesus had ceased to speak, He said to Simon: Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught.—
S. LUKE V.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us again see Jesus in Simon's ship, directing him to launch out his boat.

II. PRELUDE.

Give us, O Lord, to comprehend the important lesson we are about to meditate ; and great zeal to advance towards that degree of perfection Thou dost ask of each one of us.

I. POINT.

The progress of divine operations in souls that are docile to the Voice of God.

Our Lord having (when first entering the ship) proved the submissiveness of Simon Peter, by desiring him *to draw back a little from the land*, now directs him *to launch out into the deep*. And thus it is that He conducts souls, that are perfectly amenable to His grace. After having tried them by demanding a slight withdrawal from earthly things, a disengaging of their hearts from human affections, He requires of them that they *launch out into the deep*; that is to say: by continual progress they must advance to the furthest degree of perfection. Jesus often says to those for whom are reserved peculiar favours, as in the case of Simon, *launch out into the deep*: be not content with a half state of detachment, which keeps you near the shore: be not satisfied with the attainment of ordinary virtues: but practise acts of generous devotedness which may glorify Me and augment your merits. If God finds us faithful to His inspirations, He becomes Himself our Divine Pilot; He steers us into the high seas of His perfections, discovers the depths of His mysteries, the abyss of His greatness, the wonders of His operations in souls, the extent of His love for them. *Launch out into the deep*, He says: no longer to exert our strength in rowing against the tide, but allowing ourselves to be borne along, as the Holy Spirit directs our course. And again: after having enlightened us by His illuminating grace, aided us by His powerful assistance, He repeats: *Launch out into the deep*: and now it is to be into the deep sea of suffering, where the waves of affliction and the floods of humiliation will pass over thee:—but He adds: fear not, I

have gone in amongst the raging billows before thee, and they shall carry thee—roughly, it may be—but securely, towards the haven of eternal rest.

II. POINT.

The farther a soul advances in perfection, the more it may do to glorify God.

The Divine Pilot not only withdraws those who are willing to obey Him entirely, away from the allurements of the world, but He gives them further orders, which, dictated by His boundless love, will carry out His designs of making His true disciples to be fellow-labourers with Himself. *Let down your nets for a draught*, is the divine command. It is not enough for us to sanctify ourselves by the exercise of solid virtues, by that of prayer, nor even of mortification ; our zeal must extend itself towards the edification of others—the sanctification of our neighbour. We may cast our nets of prayer, of exhortation, of toil, of the use of talents, of good example, and win in this way, many souls ; for thus it is that God wills we should serve Him. Full of confidence in Him, we should abandon ourselves completely into His Hands, carrying out His commands—regarding our own spiritual advancement, or regarding some work of charity towards others, which He puts in our way—with alacrity and simplicity. Can Jesus trust us to fulfil His wishes ? How far have we proved that He can, when we have heard Him bid us *draw back a little from the land* of attachment to creatures ? *to launch out into the deep* of entire abandonment to Him ? *to let down the nets* of good works, and charitably seek to win souls for Him ?

COLLOQUY.

O my Jesus, in Thee I place all my confidence: do Thou direct me how to disengage my affections from the world more entirely; how to shape my course across the deep sea of abandonment, of self-abnegation—and even through the waves of affliction—if such be Thy will concerning me. Shew me how to gain some souls for Thee: inspire me with Thy spirit of charity. Make me to be dissatisfied with my hitherto slight efforts, my little—and often unwilling—sacrifices. Command me, O Lord, and give the help of Thy Good Spirit.

RESOLUTION.

To put myself more entirely under the guidance of Jesus, my Master; and follow His divine inspirations.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Draw away from the land—launch out into the deep—let down your nets.

PRAYER.

Take, O Lord, and receive.

Fourth Week after Pentecost.—Tuesday.

The Call of Peter to be an Apostle.

Simon Peter, seeing the miraculous draught of fishes, fell down at JESUS' Knees, saying: Depart from me, for I am a

sinful man, O Lord. Jesus saith to him : Fear not : from henceforth thou shalt catch men.—S. LUKE V.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent to ourselves Jesus in the ship on the Lake of Genesareth, and Peter prostrate at His Feet.

II. PRELUDE.

Give us to understand, O Lord, how necessary it is that our hearts should be humble and sincere, if we would promote Thy glory.

I. POINT.

The most feeble are very generally chosen by God, for the accomplishment of His greatest designs.

Henceforth thou shalt catch men. Jesus by these words raised Peter to the dignity of the Apostolate. This same poor fisherman, without any particular talent, filling no position of authority, devoid of all learning even, is henceforth destined to become the visible Head of the Church, the first Vicar of Him Who now becomes His Master. Judging according to human reason, it would have been more worthy of the wisdom of Jesus, had He chosen for such a destiny, a man whose science and capacities had already rendered him famous in the world. But how different are the divine counsels ! God having no need of any person, causes the wonders of His power to be made known principally by the weak and the little. *Who is as the Lord our God, Who dwelleth on high ? raising the needy from the earth, and lifting the poor out of the dunghill : that He may*

place them with the princes of His people. God is justly jealous of His glory: all honour is due to Him alone. As we see the lowly fisherman at the Feet of Jesus confessing himself a sinner, who would conjecture that he is to be exalted, during his lifetime, to a position high above that of the kings of the earth ; and that as long as the world shall last, he is to be held in higher veneration and honour than any other man who has, or ever will have, lived. *God gives grace to the humble.* If we would do great things for God, let us lose self in the depths of humility. *His power is made perfect in infirmity: gladly therefore may we glory in infirmities, that the power of Christ may dwell in us.*

II. POINT.

The fidelity of Saint Peter.

He left all—his family—his friends—his ship—and followed His Divine Master during the remainder of his life. God has destined for every one a place—a condition of life—a vocation in His Church—and He attaches His grace to the state of life to which He calls each of us. When we are faithful to the charge He has laid upon us, we enjoy profound peace ; we are sustained by His grace ; favoured with His blessing ; and attain to salvation without difficulty. But if we put ourselves outside the place, the position, the duties, in which God wills us to remain, we bring suffering on ourselves. We are continually tormented by the demon, who has power over one that is in some self-chosen sphere, where he is no longer under the protection of God ; having withdrawn himself from His guidance. If we once voluntarily wander from the way marked out by Providence, we take other false steps, and fall often ; being no longer

sustained by the grace attached to the condition and employment God has chosen for us. Therefore it is that want of fidelity to one's vocation is the cause of many troubles, and the loss even of many souls. Some engage themselves in an undertaking, for instance, in compliance with the promptings of a dominant passion ; others neglect the duties of their position to perform works of supererogation : others again, weary of remaining where Providence has placed them—of doing their appointed work in it—enter into other employments for which they are not fitted. Consequently tranquillity of soul and devotion are lost ; the duties of religion neglected ; and God reproaches them incessantly for their infidelity, and resistance of His grace. In such a case the words of the prophet may be applied : *Thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, when He led thee by the way : know thou and see that it is an evil and a bitter thing for thee.* Have pity on all such, O Heavenly Father, and restore the peace which has been lost by unfaithfulness, in not following the path marked out by Thee. In mercy call back these wanderers to a sense of their folly in forsaking Him, Whom Thou hast given to be a Leader in the way of eternal Life.

COLLOQUY.

O my Heavenly Guide ! how true is it that in turning aside from the path indicated by Thy holy Will, one meets with difficulties, and falls into many snares. Forgive me for all the self-chosen steps I have taken ; let me never again fall away from, or outrun Thy grace ; but diligently, perseveringly follow in Thy Footsteps along the pathway of my vocation. In whatever condition Thy Providence may place me, may I be content ; knowing Thou carest for me. Hast

Thou, O Jesus, not said to me, as Thou didst to Saint Peter : *Come thou after Me ?*

RESOLUTION.

To fulfil the duties of my vocation, trusting in God for guidance.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

O Lord, direct my steps according to Thy word.

PRAYER.

Take, O Lord, and receive.

Fourth Week after Pentecost.—Wednesday.

Jesus asks us to follow Him.

JESUS said : Come ye after Me : and immediately leaving all things, they followed Him.—S. MARK I.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us stand near to Jesus, and hear Him saying to the poor fishermen : *Follow Me ;* and watch their action of turning away from all they possess, to obey the divine call.

II. PRELUDE.

O Saviour, hast Thou not also bidden us to follow Thee, and attach ourselves to Thy service? Give us the grace to do this yet more perfectly.

I. POINT.

How powerful are the effects of the call of Jesus, to those who hear it, and obey it willingly.

Let us consider what our Saviour did in accomplishing His designs, when He made choice of Simon Peter and his companions. He spoke only these words of counsel : *Follow Me* ; but they possessed such power that they touched their hearts, and contributed to their becoming Apostles, Saints and Martyrs. To these words we also owe very much. Yes ! these same words once received by us, will echo and re-echo in our hearts, throughout our lives. *Follow Me*, our Adorable Lord says ; in the practice of charity—zeal—humility. *Follow Me*—I go to the holy exercise of prayer : *Follow Me*—I go to the conquest of souls ; to attract them by the sweetness of charity : *Follow Me*—having only the barest necessities of life, be content : *Follow Me*—I go to Calvary, and to the death of the Cross ; fear not, for I am near thee, My love will render thee capable of the greatest sacrifices. Such are the various interpretations which faithful souls may put upon these words : *Follow Me*. Have we heard them, and obeyed them ? Are we guided by them still ? Do we follow our Divine Master wheresoever He goes ? He takes more care of us, than we can, or even will, take of ourselves. They are happy who go after Him Who is the Light of the world, and Who said : *he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life*. A true Christian's entire confidence is in his God : the unreserved abandonment with which he gives up his will, his affections, his desires, his whole being into His keeping, assures to him strength and happiness in the midst of apparent weakness, and bitter trials. Is there

room for fear since we are protected, and directed by Him Who is All-just, All-powerful, All-merciful ?

II. POINT.

The happiness resulting from the companionship of Jesus.

We learn from the way in which the fishermen of Galilee despoiled themselves of everything, which could hold them back from following Jesus, that it is not enough to forsake greater hindrances, such as sinful habits or evil inclinations; but we must hold our hearts detached from all that the world may prize. And do we really lose anything in sacrificing the perishable goods of this life? its vain pleasures, its empty honours? The Disciples laid aside even their nets—their very means of subsistence—at their Master's bidding. This example teaches us not to be solicitous, but that we should *seek first the Kingdom of God and His justice*. The nets of self-will, however fine and unexceptionable they may appear, may, if retained, entangle us in their meshes, and hinder our progress. Rather let us leave them behind with the heavier burdens; and follow Jesus unshackled by aught that may keep us at a distance from Him. None are happier, none more free than they who *walk at large: in the liberty of the glory of the children of God*. With what thankfulness may we, if we have continued to bear Jesus company wherever He shall have been pleased to lead us, recall the hour when we first heard and obeyed His invitation: *Follow Me*. Going on with firm step in the way of salvation, we may look forward with sure confidence to the dawning of that day when, our earthly pilgrimage being over, we shall enter in triumph the City of God.

COLLOQUY.

Even in this life, O Loving Saviour, they who imitate the example of the poor fishermen of Galilee, receive a hundred-fold for that which they have left for Thy Sake. But the higher inducement to follow Thee lies in the promise that they shall possess everlasting life. It is most true that to love Thee, and to serve Thee, is to reign—to enjoy, in advance, celestial happiness.—Let me hear continually Thy Voice saying : *This is the way, walk thou in it*, during my earthly course ; and at its close do Thou bid me enter by the gate of death, through which I have so often gazed, into the joy of my eternal rest.

RESOLUTION.

To be very attentive to the Voice of our Lord, as he invites me to follow Him in the way of detachment.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Follow Me.

PRAYER.

Take, O Lord and receive.

Fourth Week after Pentecost.—Thursday.

The danger of deferring from day to day, the amendment of our lives.

Lord ! come down, before that my son die.—S. JOHN IV.

I. PRELUDE.

We see the Ruler increasing the eagerness of his entreaties, that the Saviour would go to the help of his son without further delay.

II. PRELUDE.

Inspire us, O Lord, with an ardent zeal for the correcting of our defects, which are the cause of the infirmities of our souls.

I. POINT.

In consequence of the sin of our first parents, we carry within our hearts the germ of every vice ; and this in developing, produces those maladies which, unless cured, lead on sooner or later, to death. If the attachment, that we all naturally have to this present life, inclines us to repulse that which is hurtful and destructive to it, and promptly to seek remedies and restoratives, why do we not act in the same manner for preserving the life of our soul, which is incomparably more precious than that of the body. By not combating those unseen foes which besiege the heart—those diseases of the soul which waste its strength—the supplies

of grace gradually become less : and it may be that we are thus rendering the important work of our salvation impossible. Do we gain anything by refusing to follow the prescriptions of the Good Physician ? or by waiting until there is no cure ? or until we succumb to a more violent attack ? Is it not by means of the particular care and attention given to the part affected, that we hope for a recovery ? The lesson is obvious. Our dominant faults must be rooted out. Perhaps we have been blindly fostering them, and permitting them to strengthen themselves at the expense of our general spiritual health : striking their roots deeper and deeper into our hearts, they are thus destroying all peace, and joy, and happiness, even in this life. Let us open our eyes to our true interests ; and promptly seek the remedies of God's grace.

II. POINT.

The most prompt and sure means of correcting our defects, is to apply ourselves with energy to the practice of the love of God.

Where it is intended to bring forest-land under culture, the 'ground is cleared either by the axe or by fire. If the former be made use of, the labour entailed is very fatiguing and wearisome ; and the success seldom in proportion to the toil, because the roots, not being destroyed, throw up new stems. If on the contrary, fire be employed, this active element quickly kindles the whole forest : devouring not only the leaves and branches, but destroying the trunk and roots ; and the soil thus submitted to its effects, is capable of bringing forth excellent produce.—And so with the soul. A thousand evils may have sprung up ; to eradicate these, either the axe of stern mortification, or the fire of divine love may be employed. In the use of the former, we find

ourselves obliged to painful, violent toil : but, if instead of adopting such rigid measures, we have recourse to divine love, our spiritual difficulties are laid low in a short space of time. Its sacred flames enkindled within us, will consume our passions and vices : and prepare the soil of the heart for the cultivation of great virtues. Let us beseech our Lord to make us know the extent to which our souls are impoverished by our radical defects ; so that we may the more ardently appeal to Him for an increase of divine charity, not only to destroy them, but to cause a prolific growth of every other virtue also.

COLLOQUY.

How is it, O my God, that Thou hast not left me to myself, by reason of the many noxious plants which I have permitted to over-grow and dwarf the virtues, Thou didst implant in my heart, when Thou didst choose it, that it should be a garden in which Thou desirest to dwell. Send forth the fire of Thy love, to clear away the growth of evil which Thou findest there ; and to promote the culture of all those fruitful and excellent plants in which Thou takest pleasure.

RESOLUTION.

Often to ask of God the grace to eradicate my besetting sins.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Knowest thou not that the benignity of God leadeth thee to penance.

PRAYER.

Our Father, and Hail Mary.

Fourth Week after Pentecost.—Friday.

The cure of the Ruler's son.

Lord, come down before that my son die.—S. JOHN IV.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent to ourselves the eagerness with which this afflicted father sought the cure of his son.

II. PRELUDE.

Deign to inspire us, O Jesus, with a lively faith, and great confidence in Thine infinite goodness; since these virtues honour Thee, and obtain all from Thy Divine Heart.

I. POINT.

With what ardour we ought to desire the spiritual cure of souls, so dear to Thee.

The lively solicitude of an anxious parent, whose son's life is in danger, is an image of the interest we ought to have in the restoration to health, of every soul that is enfeebled and endangered by sin. A well-ordered charity begins at home, but does not stop there. We have already considered the earnestness with which we should ourselves seek to be cured by the Good Physician: but are there none

besides who claim our solicitude? for whom we ought to rise up and leave our own ease and comfort, and go by the way of self-sacrifice in order to approach nearer to Jesus. Then fully believing that He can do all things, say: *Lord, come down before that the soul of one dear to Thee and to me, die.* Let not the enemy say: *I have prevailed against him;* but listen to my prayers, and avert the evil, ere it be too late. No one is exempt from the duty of praying for others, and God may be waiting for our petitions for a parent, a relation, a friend, an enemy: it is His Will that we should interest ourselves personally and practically in their salvation. It has been well said: "that to co-operate in saving souls, is the most heavenly of heavenly works". And prayer—fervent, persevering, trusting prayer—animated by living faith, on their behalf, will not be lost. Many there are who give themselves much anxiety—disquietude—fruitless labour—for the spiritual or temporal good of some one dear to them; but they are wasting their time, and suffering in vain, because they are, all the while, praying so little, or so badly: without that prevailing faith which alone obtains great things from God.

II. POINT.

We may have to renew our prayers again and again.

Our Lord appears, if one may so express it, to take pleasure in giving us opportunities of increasing in merit. He will often, if we can bear it, require of us acts of humility and patience. They go hand in hand—do they not? We make known our request and He appears to keep us waiting: but He has stayed the progress of the disease: *yesterday at the seventh hour*, the hour when our prayer was repeated with more confidence and earnestness, *the fever left him—*

the malady began to subside—the excitement of passion grew less. There were symptoms of amendment at the same hour that we were speaking with Jesus, for unknown to us, He was sending a good thought—a glimmer of hope—a desire to do penance—a message of love. Prayer moves the Will of God. *The continual prayer of the just availeth much.* If we have cause to bewail the condition of any particular soul, let us pray as the Ruler did for his son, who was at the point of death :—as Saint Monica did for her son, whom she was to win from the very gates of hell, by the tears and prayers of many weary years. It is the Will of God that every one should be saved : *And this is the confidence which we have towards Him : that whatsoever we ask according to His Will, He heareth us.* Let us ask from motives of fraternal charity; but still more that God may be eternally glorified, by the rescue of another soul from the enemy's power—from everlasting perdition.

COLLOQUY.

I feel how wanting I am in faith and perseverance, when praying on behalf of those for whom I ought in charity, to pray the most earnestly. Lord, come down and visit them with Thy grace, ere they die. *Open Thou their eyes that they may be converted from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God ; that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a lot among the saints.*

RESOLUTION.

To pray much for all poor sinners ; but especially for those whom I know to be ignorant of, or indifferent to, their own danger.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

O Lord, hearken and do, delay not, for Thy own Sake, O my God.

PRAYER.

Our Father, and Hail Mary.

Fourth Week after Pentecost.—Saturday.

The universality of the zeal of Jesus.

JESUS went into a desert place, and the multitudes sought Him and came unto Him : and they detained Him that He should not depart from them : To whom he said : To other cities also I must preach the kingdom of God : for therefore am I sent.—S. LUKE IV.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent to ourselves Jesus surrounded by a multitude, who entreat Him not to leave the country where they dwelt.

II. PRELUDE.

O Thou, Who didst labour so zealously for the salvation of all men, deign to inspire our souls with a lively zeal, to procure the same end, by the same means of work and prayer.

I. POINT.

Jesus laboured for the salvation of all.

I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities, for therefore am I sent. Jesus manifested by these words the extent of his zéal, which all evangelical labourers should share with Him. He declared that He was not sent on earth, by the Heavenly Father, to proclaim the good tidings of salvation only to one city or to one people : and although He did not Himself preach beyond the limits of Palestine, yet He appointed delegates to carry on His own mission, until *all the earth should be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the covering waters of the sea.* His parting injunction to His Apostles was : *Going therefore, teach all nations.* Jesus is the Saviour of all. To Him we owe the light which enlightened our forefathers, and which has been transmitted to us. Whose doctrines are those which the Catholic Church has taught in all ages, and all lands ? and will hand down to the last generation of men ? Are they not the same which were preached by Her Divine Head ? It is the spirit of Jesus which has ever since been renewing the face of the earth, by inspiring those who bear the name of Christians to establish and uphold charitable institutions ; to propagate the Faith ; to educate children according to His precepts ; to extend the kingdom of God with loving zeal. The actions, the words, the whole life of a true child of the Church form a reflex of the practice of the God-Man—an embodiment of His teaching.

II. POINT.

Jesus wills that we should, each one of us, labour for the salvation of all men.

The perfect unselfishness of our Adorable Saviour demands not only our admiration, but also our imitation; especially in regard of the spiritual progress of others: for alas! how often does the interest taken in the spiritual welfare of our neighbour savour of envy, curiosity, and the subtle pride of influence. In all this, is there the least trace of the pure devotedness of the Son of Mary, as He fulfilled His Mission on earth? We should be actuated by this one motive—that of seconding His designs—which we shall best do by working in His spirit of love, of zeal, of condescension, and of self-forgetfulness,—with kindly sympathy entering into the trials and needs of others—just as Jesus did—drawing forth from their hearts that latent love of God, and trust in Him, which truly unselfish zeal will surely arouse. We sometimes vaguely set ourselves to work in a self-chosen way, without taking Jesus into our confidence at all; and if we question our motives we find that natural inclination—attachment to our own views—self-love, in fact—has had much to do with our zeal in some apparently excellent cause. The good springing from such a source, will generally be not only limited, but evanescent. Purity of intention is then what we must aim at, in our endeavours to carry on the work for which the Divine Saviour was sent amongst men. And He puts constant opportunities in our way, of manifesting our love and zeal,—of sacrificing our time, our talents, our own temporal interests, for the benefit of others. And for these opportunities we shall have to render an account, when He shall come again to reckon with His servants.

COLLOQUY.

Give me, I beseech Thee, O Lord, that spirit of universal ardour for the salvation of men, which animated Thee. May

my zeal never be narrowed down to my own selfish views : give me grace to omit none of the means which Thou, in Thy Providence, dost place within my reach, of procuring the spiritual advancement of others. Let me ever act in obedience to Thy Will, simply carrying on Thy own mission on earth : whether it be by active labour, or untiring prayer. There is no soul that is not dear to Thee—for which Thou hast not come down from Heaven, and after a Life of self-sacrifice, died upon the Cross.—Accept my life and my death, so that in both I may participate in the merits of all Thou hast done for the salvation of our souls.

RESOLUTION.

To extend the work of salvation, for which God sent His Son into this world, by the exercise of His own spirit of zeal.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

God our Saviour will have all men to be saved.

PRAYER.

Our Father, and Hail Mary.

Fifth Week after Pentecost.—Sunday.

The perfection which Jesus requires of His disciples.

Unless your justice abound more than that of the Scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter the Kingdom of Heaven.—
S. MATT. V.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us place ourselves upon the mountain near to our Lord, and listen to the warning He gives in these words, to those who have followed Him there.

II. PRELUDE.

Give us grace to understand to what perfection Thou desirest all Christians to attain ; but particularly those who make an especial profession of piety.

I. POINT.

The virtues of such as call themselves the disciples of Jesus Christ must be solid.

Unless your justice shall abound more than that of the Scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter the Kingdom of Heaven. The Scribes were the theoretical exponents of the Law ; the Pharisees rigidly observed its external practices. And yet our Lord condemned them as being hypocrites, saying: *All their works they do to be seen by men.*—The piety that is pleasing to God must be unfeigned : it is the heart that He looks into, it is with the heart that He wills to be served. *Not serving to the eye, as it were pleasing men, but as the servants of Christ, doing the Will of God from the heart, with a good will serving, as to the Lord and not to men.* An outward appearance only of piety, renders a person worthy of greater condemnation, than another who makes no profession at all of being religious.—Such an affectation is hateful in God's sight, since holy practices are put to the unholy use of disguising the reality. Jesus incurred the bitter hatred of the Scribes and Pharisees, by unmasking

their hypocrisy. If we examine the impulses of our heart and mind, and our outward seeming, side-by-side, and find any discrepancy between them, let us thank our Lord for His salutary warning. It has aroused our attention, and makes us see in a stronger light that too often self-esteem, and the desire of being esteemed by others, is prompting us to imitate those to whom our Lord said : *For this you shall receive the greater judgment.* Let one of our most fervent prayers be, that we may be preserved from all unreality : that Jesus will so increase His love in us, that the desire of pleasing Him only, may predominate over any other motive.

II. POINT.

The higher our spiritual advantages are, the more simple should our hidden motives become.

The good pleasure of God, as our principle of action, must never therefore be substituted by a seeking after our own satisfaction, under any form whatever ; nor the thought of the eternal recompense, by a desire of present applause. It is against this fatal mistake that, being forewarned, we must be forearmed. We must watch ourselves narrowly, to see that any lower aim glide not into our best works, to vitiate them ; and make them unworthy of God's recognition of them, as services rendered to Him. It was solid piety that Jesus asked of His disciples when He was with them ; and He as clearly asks the same of us to-day. The many means of perfection offered to such as are specially consecrated to Him, gives Him an undeniable claim to a straightforward devotedness in His cause ; which is simply the promotion of His honour—of His glory. But what if the unaffected piety of some who live in the midst of the

busy world, should reproach the self-seeking of those in religion who, in consequence of their greater privileges, are reserving to themselves the *greater judgment* of which our Lord speaks. *To whomsoever much is given, of them much shall be required*, and the *much* that is demanded of us may be summed up in this : the lifting up of our daily life above the mire of self-glorification, and presenting it in quiet sacrifice to the Heavenly Father. Thus we shall *do all for the glory of God*. This ought to be easy : but Jesus knew that for us, with our inverted tendencies, it would be difficult, and that it would oblige us to unflagging watchfulness.

COLLOQUY.

O Lord Jesus, I thank Thee with sentiments of liveliest gratitude, for having shown me plainly that my good works are not worthy of Thine acceptance, unless they be free from the desire of gaining any applause, save Thine. Thou hast given me simple rules for making all my actions pleasing in Thy sight ; Thou askest of me that I should not merely *do them to be seen of men*—to secure their good opinion, which is valueless—but to put all hypocrisy far from me, and to consecrate my daily life solely to the promoting of Thy glory, O God.

RESOLUTION.

To act at all times with the simple intention of pleasing God alone.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

With a good will serving, as to the Lord and not to men.

PRAYER.

Take, O Lord, and receive.

Fifth Week after Pentecost.—Monday.**Contempt of riches—Love of poverty.**

JESUS said : The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests : but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His Head.—S. MATT. VIII.

I. PRELUDE.

We see Jesus accompanied by His Disciples, and we hear how He is inspiring them with His own love of poverty.

II. PRELUDE.

Divine Jesus, although Thou wast the Master of all the wealth of the world, Thou didst embrace extreme poverty : deign to inspire us with a real love for it.

I. POINT.

The poverty of Jesus was extreme.

The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His Head. Such is the touching description Jesus gives of His poverty. He owned not even a place of shelter, where He could take His rest. Without limiting our considerations to the exterior practice of this complete state of privation, let us try to find our way into the reasons that our Lord had for adopting it. We see that He not only did so voluntarily, and

by preference, but that He loved poverty in such a manner, as to make it His cherished and constant companion ; and this, because according to His infinite wisdom, it is far more precious than are the passing goods of this world. He gladly bore the privations, sufferings, inconveniences, and humiliations, which poverty entails ; by this means to make reparation for the vast extent of harm occasioned in the world, by attachment to riches. Faithful disciples of Jesus Christ, therefore—and above all, religious—should love to dwell upon the lessons contained in the fact that their Master—their Divine Spouse—chose to be poor, and not rich ; and understand how essential it is, that they think and act as He did.

II. POINT.

We should not only put in practice the spirit of poverty, but we should also love and care for the poor.

In order to imitate Jesus, we have perhaps renounced willingly all attachment to the goods of this world ; but have we entered into the spirit of poverty ? Have we a real love for it ? so that we not only joyfully put up with its disagreeables, when opportunities occur of doing so, but also gladly manifest a warm sympathy towards those who are poverty-stricken ? having a real fellow-feeling for them. Do we habitually see Jesus in the persons of the poor ? With what reverence and gladness should we have offered Him hospitality, had we lived when He was on earth !—have provided Him with the necessaries of life !—have ministered to Him, as did the holy women ! What attention would have appeared too great ? Has every opportunity passed away of waiting upon—relieving the wants of—Jesus ? Surely not. *So long as you did it to one of these, My least*

brethren, you did it to Me. . . . And there are not only the poor, with regard to temporal possessions, who ask alms of us, but there are those who are in need of the spiritual goods of instruction ; or who are destitute of the garments of virtue—of the apparel of holiness of life. May we not distribute the bread of knowledge, and procure the raiment of God's grace, for the ignorant and the needy? Such acts of compassion will render us agreeable in the Sight of our Beloved, and He will reward us with the eternal possession of Himself, *in Whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.*

COLLOQUY.

My Jesus, Thou Who art the Creator and the Master of all things, I adore Thee in that condition of extreme indigence, to which Thou didst reduce Thyself for love of me ; and I thank Thee for that voluntary deprivation of even the very necessities of life, which Thou didst endure, in order to discover to Thy faithful disciples, the treasures which are hidden within the practice of holy poverty. Grant that, cherishing detachment from the goods of this world more and more, I may practise it with increasing generosity and devotion : may I also love the poor for Thy Sake, and give to Thee, in their persons, all the help and care in my power.

RESOLUTION,

To love, and practise better, the virtue of poverty.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Our Lord Jesus Christ became poor for our sakes, that through His poverty we might be rich.

PRAYER.

O Jesus, living.

Fifth Week after Pentecost.—Tuesday.

The gate which leadeth to Life is narrow.

Enter ye in at the narrow gate: How narrow is the gate, and straight is the way that leadeth to Life! and few there be that find it.—S. MATT. VII.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us again represent to ourselves our Lord upon the mountain, delivering the third part of His sermon to the people. It contains this divine counsel: that we should seek the narrow way that leads to Life.

II. PRELUDE.

Grant, O Jesus, that we may all take good heed to this Thy solemn advice; seeing how much depends on our following it.

I. POINT.

They who go through the narrow gate, must lay down at the entrance all that might hinder their progress.

The first thing that our Divine Example asks of those persons, who are desirous of working out their salvation efficaciously is, that they put aside all that may hinder them from advancing along the strait path of perfection. There must be no clinging to the things of this world, which weigh down the strength, and impede progress. If we examine

our past life, and have to acknowledge that we have spent it in constant anxiety of mind, and wearying doubtfulness as to where to find peace and happiness, is it not because we have placed our affections too much on those who have betrayed them? who have disappointed our hopes? We are vain, inconstant, defective, indigent, powerless creatures: if we depend too much on others, and yield up to them those affections which should be reserved for One Who cannot deceive, and will not forsake His chosen friends, we shall never proceed far along the narrow path. There is no room for any other companion, on whom to lean: in whom to confide, as we may in Him Who is Himself the Way. As we enter the narrow gate we must be prepared to be led by Him down into the valley of humiliation, and up the mountain-steeps of trial and difficulty; but we shall walk with ease and rapidity, if unencumbered by worldly attachments, and attracted onwards by the love of Jesus; and the desire of gaining that height of perfection to which He has called us.

II. POINT.

We must not only leave behind us attachment to the world, and to creatures, but also attachment to self.

There must be a firm purpose of actually forsaking all things that may create a rivalry in our hearts: the love of God will have no competitor. Self is the most importunate of all the candidates for our affection: long after we have, by God's grace, freed ourselves from the importunities of the world and its allurements, we find self-love following us still, detaining us to listen to its specious arguments, or spreading its finely-woven subtleties to impede our progress. To turn a deaf ear to all its flatteries, to spurn its snares,

and pursue our course, regardless of its attempts to delay us, is truly wise. We ought to seek to be able to say, in all sincerity, with Saint Paul : *I count not myself as already perfect ; but one thing I do : forgetting the things that are behind, and stretching forth myself to those that are before, I press towards the mark—to the prize of the supernal vocation of God, in Christ Jesus.* The supernal vocation is contained in our Lord's words : *Enter ye in at the narrow gate :* and the prize in view, at the end of the strait path, is Life eternal, within the gates of that City *which is enlightened by the glory of God.* In each heart is implanted a longing after happiness ; but the mistake is, that it seeks to find it here—too soon—and not finding it, accepts in its place a base imitation : this is not God's design. The worldly heart will never find anything approximating to real happiness : those who obey our Lord's injunction to go along the road that leads directly to it, will, sooner or later, catch a glimpse of the joys of Paradise, to cheer them on ; they will hear the distant strains of those *who sing the new canticle before the Throne of God,* as they hasten on towards that Abode of true happiness, the very anticipation of enjoying which, shall afford them ineffable peace. The desires of the heart are infinite, and nought can ever satisfy it, but the possession of God in Heaven.

COLLOQUY.

Thou hast called me to enter the narrow gate, and to follow Thee, O Lord, in the strait path of perfection, which Thou didst Thyself tread during Thy mortal Life. Thou hast shewn me the vanity of attaching my heart to creatures, the hindrances which the world would put in my way, did I hesitate in my choice of the road by which to travel. Keep me from ever wandering away from Thy side : let me never

turn, nor even look back ; but daily disentangling my affections more entirely from self-love, proceed with rapid steps thither, where my heart's best desires lead me—to the Home of God and of true happiness.

RESOLUTION.

To persevere in the narrow way of perfection.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Guide me, O Lord, in the right path, because of my enemies.

PRAYER.

Our Father, and Hail Mary.

Fifth Week after Pentecost.—Wednesday.

Jesus casting out devils.

There was in the synagogue a man with an unclean spirit ; and he cried out, saying : What have we to do with Thee, JESUS of Nazareth ? art Thou come to destroy us ? And JESUS threatened him, saying : Speak no more, and go out of the man.—S. MARK I.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent to ourselves Jesus surrounded by a numerous audience in the synagogue ; He is spoken to by a devil.

II. PRELUDE.

O Jesus, Thy power equals Thy goodness: banish far from us all evil spirits, who desire to destroy us; and to dwell in our hearts, of which Thou art the Master by right of conquest.

I. POINT.

Our Divine Saviour is come to destroy the power of Satan.

How great is the mercy of Jesus towards us! In His love for mankind, He came to overthrow the tyrannical power that the devil exercised upon them; to restrain him from making his assaults, as if he had a right to possess them. Jesus came to establish His rule of gentleness, and to restore to the world that liberty, which the children of God were hereafter to enjoy. What should we now be, had we not been visited by this *Holy One of God*, before Whom the devils trembled and fled away? For our sakes He descended from Heaven, to form between our souls and Himself so close a union, that we might be strong in His strength, and live by His Spirit. Nevertheless, we may not deceive ourselves into thinking that we are safe from the attacks of the enemy. Although his power is chained, and held within bounds, and he can do us no further injury than we ourselves permit, yet all the fiends, together with their cruel master, have lost nothing of their hatred, nor of their desire that we should become partakers in their ruin: and the more faithful to God we are, the more furious are they against us. They conspire together against the truest friends of Jesus, seeking to wound Him by assaulting them. But He will not suffer them to touch them, because they

trust in Him for protection. He saith still, as of old : *He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of My eye.*

II. POINT.

The weakness of the devil, and the power of Jesus Christ.

Jesus exorcised the evil spirits through His own power, by a single word, and constrained them to flee. His Presence is sufficient to put our enemies to flight ; if they approach us, His all-powerful word will quickly disperse them. Hence Saint Francis de Sales says : “Immediately that you perceive a temptation, have recourse to God, call upon Him for help, implore His mercy. Our Lord Himself prescribes one simple remedy : *Pray—lest you enter into temptation.* So long as you are assailed by it then—pray. Embrace in spirit the holy Cross, as if you saw Jesus hanging upon it : protest to Him that you will not enter into the temptation by consenting to it. Dwell not upon the temptation itself ; for by presenting fears to your mind, it might shake your courage. It is better to divert the mind by occupying it with other considerations, yet all the while remaining in the Presence of Him Who will not fail to command the tempter to depart from you.” How powerless the devil is if we give no heed to his suggestions ; but do we not sometimes do this ? If Jesus were the only Master of our hearts, if we followed the inspirations of His Spirit of Wisdom and of Strength, our soul would become like an impregnable fortress. Make us, O Lord, more wary, so that we may detect our enemy, however cleverly he disguise himself : however hidden his snares may be, may he never gain an advantage over us. If Thou Thyself willest that he should try our fidelity, as he has tried that of the greatest Saints,

we will remember that he was permitted to approach Thy own Sacred Person, and to tempt Thee ; to make us feel sure that *Thou canst have compassion on our infirmities, having been Thyself tempted like as we are*—only Thou wast sinless ! O Holy One of God, deliver us from evil.

COLLOQUY.

O divine Word of my Lord, to Thee the devils are subject ! Thou, O Jesus, wilt never permit them to defeat me, for in all my combats I will look to Thee for succour, and not confide in my own strength. *Although not ignorant of his devices*, remove from me all alarm of being ensnared by them. I know that Thou, to Whom I entirely belong, wilt undoubtedly protect me. *In Thee, O Lord, have I trusted, let me never be confounded.*

RESOLUTION.

To trust in Jesus for victory in the hour of temptation.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

The Lord is the Protector of my life : of whom shall I be afraid ?

PRAYER.

Soul of Christ.

Fifth Week after Pentecost.—Thursday.

We must be Confessors in the cause of Jesus.

Every one, therefore, that shall confess Me before men, I will also confess before My Father Who is in Heaven : but he that shall deny Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father Who is in Heaven.—S. MATT. X.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us take to heart these words of our Lord, as if we ourselves had heard them, together with the Disciples.

II. PRELUDE.

O Jesus, grant that by our lives we may confess before all men that we belong to Thee, that Thou art our Lord and Master.

I. POINT.

The unhappy condition of a soul that chooses to side with the enemies of Jesus.

Alas ! there are many, who by their lives openly profess not to belong to Jesus ; who deny that He has any claim to their service—to their allegiance. He would be their Saviour, and they refuse to be saved by Him : He would be their Redeemer, and they will not be bought back at the price of His Precious Blood : He would be their Advocate with the Father, and they reject the idea of placing their

cause in His hands : He would be their Shepherd, and they prefer to remain outside the true Fold : He will be their Judge, and they continue to deny Him, notwithstanding the solemn threat that if they do so, *He will deny them before His Father Who is in Heaven.* He will condemn them to spend eternity amongst those, whom they have chosen for their friends and allies during this life. These miserable souls, after having been by them despoiled of the apparel of grace, of virtue, of merits, having been robbed of the ornament of innocence, have connived with the plunderers, and accepted their terms—made peace with them, at the expense of losing for ever the friendship of God. They have purchased a false and fatal peace, and at what a sacrifice ! O Jesus, we turn from this sad picture to Thee, and beseech of Thee to preserve us from ever giving ourselves into the hand of Thine enemies : may we never be so faithless as to deny that Thou art our Chosen Friend, but own Thee for such, although the avowal might cost us our lives : *For what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his soul ?* By a miracle of grace an enemy may become a faithful subject—therefore let us not cease to pray.

II. POINT.

The true peace enjoyed by those who confess Jesus before the world.

I will confess them before My Father Who is in Heaven. Are not these words, coming from the Lips of Jesus, quite sufficient to assure to us true and lasting peace ? What more could we wish for ? What we have done for Him—faintly and feebly it may be—He will do for us : and His word of commendation will secure for us the approbation of the Eternal Father, and will be our passport to the kingdom

prepared for us. To confess Jesus aright is to evidence by our thoughts, our words, and our deeds, that we belong wholly and entirely to Him ; to shew that we are completely under His sway ; that we glory in having Him for our King. And yet are we not cowardly sometimes, when His honour is at stake ? If we do not go over to the enemy, yet do we not fight as if we were half ashamed of our choice ?—Sometimes a word—just a little word—would do so much for our Lord, but we leave it unsaid for want of courage : sometimes a single action would lift the standard of the Cross higher, but we are too slothful to do it : sometimes we might repair our omissions of duty, but we are indifferent to the loss our Master has suffered by our negligence. Let Him be able to trust His honour in our hands more entirely ; to reckon upon our fidelity in His service, even though the world and Satan are arrayed against us. We may have to fight single-handed, but Jesus is watching the combat, and will stretch forth His Hand to protect us. We cannot hope to be Martyrs in deed and thus prove our loyalty, but we may all be Confessors, and look for their reward.

COLLOQUY.

O my Lord Jesus, let me never again be ashamed of Thee. Forgive me for that cowardice, which has sometimes overcome my better resolutions to confess Thee unflinchingly before men, whenever Thou shouldst give me an opportunity of procuring Thine honour by word or action. And let my every thought bear witness to my fidelity to Thy love, and my willingness to suffer aught that it may bring upon me of reproach, or even disgrace.—In that great Day, O Jesus, confess me before Thy Father, as Thine own true servant.

RESOLUTION.

To be more faithful in confessing Jesus Christ.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Recompense shall be made thee at the resurrection of the just.

PRAYER.

Our Father, and Hail Mary.

Fifth Week after Pentecost.—Friday.

Jesus heals all manner of diseases.

And going out of the synagogue, JESUS came into the house of Simon and Andrew : they tell JESUS forthwith of Simon's wife's mother, who was lying sick of a fever : He touched her hand and the fever left her ; and she arose and ministered to them. When it was evening all the city was gathered together at the door of Simon's house, and JESUS healed many who were troubled with divers diseases.—S. MARK I.

I. PRELUDE.

We see Jesus in the city of Capharnaum, where He entered the house of Simon Peter ; and having cured the mother-in-law of this Disciple, at the close of the same day He restored health to many who were brought to Him.

II. PRELUDE.

Divine Jesus, Whose charity is unfailing, have pity on the many infirmities and diseases of our souls, and give us grace to manifest our gratitude for all Thy goodness.

I. POINT.

The motive of charity which prompted Jesus to go to Simon Peter's house.

We are not led to suppose that Jesus had been directly informed of the illness of Simon's wife's mother. A short time before, he had left his family and friends to follow his Divine Master; and now Jesus, by a spontaneous act of kindness and courtesy proves His affectionate regard for His Disciple, by carrying the benediction of His Presence, and of His power to heal, into the home that Disciple had forsaken for His sake. God often bestows blessings on the relatives of those who have consecrated themselves to Him in holy Religion; especially where they themselves have taken part in the required sacrifice, with willing hearts. *The sacrifice of the just is acceptable, and the Lord will not forget the memorial thereof.* Jesus having entered the humble dwelling of Simon and Andrew, permits them to shew their charity towards the sick woman, and their trust in Himself, by calling His attention to her. He rewarded their exercise of these virtues, by her instant cure.—We may learn a lesson of gratitude from her, as we see her immediately using her restored powers in ministering to Jesus, and offering Him hospitality. When we have received any particular blessing from God, are we not often so slow in shewing our appreciation of it? To Him we are indebted for our health, our strength, our powers of body and mind.

Do we really thank Him as we ought, by using them entirely in His service?—ministering to Him with devotedness and thankfulness? giving Him the best of all we possess?

II. POINT.

Our Lord can and will cure all our spiritual maladies.

There is certainly no bodily disease which Jesus cannot cure, if it be for our eternal advantage that He should listen to our requests in this manner. If we do not obtain a favourable answer to such a prayer, we may rest assured that bodily suffering is useful for us. But the petition for the restoration of the health and strength of our souls is never denied, when we carefully and humbly discover to Jesus our spiritual maladies. Yet in some persons there is such a cold indifference about these, that their good-will grows less and less, and they at length care nothing about advancing towards entire recovery. Some again, from being spiritually blinded, are prevented from perceiving the dangers which surround them;—and others are deaf and insensible to the most touching exhortations on the fear and love they should have for God. Are we, as it were, cherishing our spiritual diseases? Jesus is still waiting at the open door for us to come by, and bring our complaints before Him. A single look—a single word—a single *I will*, is sufficient on the part of the Good Physician to effect an improvement in our condition, or a complete cure. But there must be confidence on our part, and a willingness to be healed. If our souls are sick and languishing, may we not attribute it to the little desire we have of getting better? Give us, O Jesus, similar feelings to those which they evinced, who availed themselves so gladly of Thy visit to their city, to obtain their cure.

COLLOQUY.

O Most Good and Compassionate Saviour, Who dost come to the help of all who stand in need of Thy assistance, I thank Thee for all Thou hast done to give health to my soul. Owing to my negligence, my want of vigilance, I have still many spiritual ailments, and defects arising from natural frailty ; but I will trust in Thee, as the Physician of my soul, knowing that Thou wilt listen to my prayer : *Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed : save me and I shall be saved, for Thou art my praise.*

RESOLUTION.

To ask Jesus to cure me of my faults—first one and then another.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Heal my soul, for I have sinned against Thee.

PRAYER.

Soul of Christ.

Fifth Week after Pentecost.—Saturday.

Jesus withdrew into a desert place to pray.

And rising very early, JESUS went out into a desert place : and there He prayed.—S. MARK I.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us follow our Lord into that solitary place to which He retires; and see the reverence and recollection with which He prays to the Heavenly Father.

II. PRELUDE.

Divine Master, give to us Thy Spirit of fervour, so that we may be ready to leave our work for prayer, or our prayer for work, according to Thy example.

I. POINT.

Our Lord joined prayer with action.

All the public Life of Jesus was a life of charity and devotedness towards men: He instructed them, relieved them in sickness, and hastened to the succour of human misery on every side. But He also often withdrew, even from His Disciples, and went apart into solitude to pray. We ask Thee, O Lord, why Thou didst escape from the people who came to listen to Thy words, and to make known their wants. Didst Thou fear dissipation—Thou, whose mind could never be disturbed? Or vain-glory—Thou, to Whom all honour in Heaven and earth is due? Jesus gives us to understand that it was not for Himself, but for us that He feared. He retires to shew us how necessary prayer and recollectedness will be found to be, especially in the case of those whom He intends to associate with Himself in active work. Like Him, He would have us withdraw, that we may invoke the Holy Spirit of God—gain fresh strength—receive that fire of divine love into our hearts, which we are to communicate to those amongst whom our work lies,—and

attract, whilst in retreat, divine benedictions on our labours. Prayer is so necessary : it ought to precede, accompany, and follow all our actions in order to render them agreeable to God. Truly if we would keep up this habit of prayer we must, like Jesus, go aside from our work, from time to time, and give up our whole attention to Him, Who has bidden us to make our every request known to Himself. Never must we forget that the first and most important of all our occupations is, that of honouring God by communicating to Him our desires, and our thanks. We shall, by fidelity to this duty, grow in His love, and draw down His mercy on ourselves and others.

II. POINT.

Jesus retires into a desert place to avoid the applause of men.

After having exercised, towards all who came to Him, His compassion, and manifested His power to work miracles, then it was that Jesus withdrew. This He did to teach us to escape as much as possible from the vain applause of men, when we may have performed a praiseworthy action.—We should retire as quickly as we can, to thank God for having given success to our endeavours ; we should strive to forget all creatures at such a moment, and occupy ourselves entirely with Him Who has been our Helper. And if it be impracticable to enter into exterior solitude, we should act upon the advice of Saint Francis de Sales: “Remember that one of the most essential points of the spiritual life is, to withdraw often into the solitude of our own hearts ; even whilst business and conversation may be outwardly occupying us : by this means we can remain alone there, with God”.

This was the constant practice of King David in the midst of His various avocations, as we find from His own words, so often reiterated : *I set the Lord always in my sight : for He is at my right hand that I shall not be moved : I lift up my eyes to Thee, Who dwellest in Heaven.* Seldom is it that our conversation is so absorbing, and our employments are so engrossing, that the soul cannot abstract from them at least a little attention for herself, such being always her due. If we put into practice the counsel our Lord Himself gave to Saint Catherine : “Think of Me,” He will also fulfil towards us the promise He affixed to the counsel : “And I will think of thee”. Behind this mutual interchange of thought we shall be sheltered from the dangers of the world, and be safe from the attacks of the enemy of our salvation. Let us examine ourselves to see what we are really doing to secure such happy results. Do we know how, quickly to retire into this interior solitude, by rejecting all other thoughts but those of God ? Do we strive to unite the contemplative with the active life ? following the example of Jesus.

COLLOQUY.

O my Divine Example, how greatly must I reproach myself for my want of recollection—my little love for solitude—although Thou art ever ready to share it with me. If I joined prayer to action habitually, how often should I avoid the two great dangers of vain-glory and dissipation of mind ; for I find that however good and holy my employments may be in themselves, I am too self-absorbed in performing them ; and lift my thoughts up to Thee far too unfrequently. Give me a greater love of interior silence, and of retreat ; so that my life, with all its occupations, may be sanctified thereby.

RESOLUTION.

To maintain in myself a more constant spirit of recollection.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

We ought always to pray, and not to faint.

PRAYER.

Our Father, and Hail Mary.

Sixth Week after Pentecost.—Sunday.

The multiplying of the Loaves.

There was a great multitude, and they had nothing to eat : calling His disciples together, JESUS saith to them : I have compassion on the multitude, for behold they have now been with Me three days, and have nothing to eat : And if I send them away fasting to their homes, they will faint in the way, for some of them came from afar off.—S. MARK VIII.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent to ourselves Jesus surrounded by a vast concourse of people, who eagerly listen to His holy discourse.

II. PRELUDE.

Give us to understand, O Lord, with what merciful charity Thou dost provide for the necessities of those who forget themselves, as they listen to Thy Divine teaching, and seek to practise it.

I. POINT.

The care God takes of all His creatures, and of each one of us in particular.

God is the Master and Lord of all creatures : He has drawn them out of nothing, by a single act of His Will, and gives to each that which is necessary for the maintaining of their natural existence, so long as that existence is to last. He governs them by His Providence, He is present to all, knows all, exerts His power over all ; nothing takes its place in the world, however insignificant or important, without His permission. Every thing is regulated with infinite goodness and wisdom. What cause we have for confidence in God ! And if He takes such care of all creatures, in general, if He deigns to provide for the wants even of those who outrage His laws, what must not His goodness and carefulness be for the just—His friends—His children ? He manifests towards them the most considerate attention, He protects them with the greatest care, He leads them by sure paths to their appointed end. Let us strive to merit the special protection of His paternal Providence, for whilst we calmly confide in Him, our calmness and confidence must not be indolent. We find that the Divine Master, when He would feed the multitude in the wilderness, exacted to a certain degree the co-operation of His Disciples ; for it was as they were engaged in carrying out His commands, that

the loaves were multiplied in their hands, as they required more and more bread to distribute to the people. While we hope in God we must also act, and that with prudence, and according to the light and strength given us by God. The result of meditating upon this miracle should be : that we imitate the obedience of Thy Apostles, O Lord Jesus, and the fervour of the people, who wearied not of being with Thee.

II. POINT.

We ought to abandon ourselves with entire confidence to Divine Providence.

I have compassion on the multitude, for behold they have now been with Me three days, and have nothing to eat : And if I send them away fasting to their homes, they will faint in the way, for some of them came from afar off. These words of our Lord give us to understand, that He deigns to pay attention to all that we do for Him. He reckons up the days—the hours—we spend in His service : He observes what, and how we suffer for His Sake : He sees all our wants, spiritual and temporal—nothing is hidden from Him. He knows what is best for us ; He can, and will grant it to us, because He is All-powerful and All-wise. Could we, for an instant, doubt His will to procure what is good for us, when He Himself assures us that His love infinitely surpasses that of the tenderest mother for her children ? If reason alone instruct us, can there be anything more in accordance with its teaching, than an entire abandonment of ourselves, and all our concerns to the Providence of God ? And certainly nothing can be more agreeable to Him, and for us nothing more advantageous ; and we may live in great peace of mind, since He Who alone is infinitely wise, in-

finitely powerful, infinitely good, is taking care of us. How consoling are these thoughts ! They sustained Saint Teresa in the midst of the great labours she undertook for God, and the trials which afflicted her soul : “ God knows all—He can do all—and He loves me ”—this great Saint would often say. We should engrave this in our memory, and have no other care than that of serving our Lord fervently, of pleasing Him ; so may we repose trustingly on His infinite goodness in our regard.

COLLOQUY.

O Divine Providence of my God ! I adore Thee, I love Thee, and I thank Thee for all the benefits Thou hast conferred on me. I ask pardon for my miserable ingratitude and distrust ; so often displayed at those moments when I should have abandoned myself wholly to Thy care. How is it that I forget so often Thy power and Thy goodness ? and try to help myself—to accept the help of creatures—before even making an act of confidence in Thee ? or placing my difficulties—my cares—my troubles—in Thy hands ? Lord ! into Thy keeping do I commend myself, now and for ever.

RESOLUTION.

During this day to make frequent acts of resignation, regarding all that God's Providence may appoint.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Casting all your care upon God, for He hath care of you.

PRAYER.

Take, O Lord, and receive.

Sixth Week after Pentecost.—Monday.

The cure of the Woman who touched our Lord's garment.

A great multitude followed Jesus, and they thronged Him : and a woman who had been ill twelve years, came in the crowd behind Him, and touched His garment : For she said : If I shall but touch His garment, I shall be whole : And the woman was made whole from that hour.—S. MARK V.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent to ourselves this poor sick woman, all weak as she was, forcing her way through the crowd to approach nearer to Jesus.

II. PRELUDE.

Grant, O Holy Saviour, that approaching Thee with reverent confidence, we may merit to feel within ourselves that divine virtue which emanates from Thee.

I. POINT.

Ardent desires and humble confidence obtain everything from Jesus that we need.

The line of conduct adopted by this sick woman, and its success, shews us with what confidence we ought to go to Jesus—to touch the hem of His garment. For twelve long years had she been uselessly trying all sorts of remedies : now at length she hears of the Great Physician, of His power

over all diseases; and so determines to go to Him without staying to consider the difficulties she might expect to meet with, before she could gain access to Him. This cure was to be of world-wide fame, and was reserved until the Son of God should be thereby glorified. Do we ever pause to think of the way in which God times the bestowal of His graces? Jesus had known all the suffering of the poor woman during twelve years; but He waits for her desire to be healed by Himself, to bring out her faith before a great multitude of people, to whom He would testify His appreciation of this act of confidence, and teach them, and us, that grace is imparted from Him through visible means. If we have only a slight wish to reach Jesus, that He may make us partakers of His virtues, we shall perhaps fail altogether in obtaining any favour: if we do not persevere, it is a sign that we are wanting in fervour and submission. It was the respectful confidence of this woman which moved the compassionating Heart of Jesus; for not considering herself worthy to touch His Sacred Person, and believing that all that was His personally, even His garments, possessed extraordinary curative virtue, she bravely made her way through the crowd, took hold of the hem of His raiment, and in the self-same instant felt herself cured. Jesus communicated this grace as a reward for her simple faith: if our faith equalled hers in simplicity, how many more favours should we obtain? What happy changes would be produced in us? Jesus would not only grant us the grace which we are sure He is able to bestow, but would also commend us as He did this woman: *I know that virtue is gone out from Me: thy faith hath made thee whole, go in peace.*

II. POINT.

All was and is life-giving in Jesus Christ.

All, in our Divine Master, produced life, and shed it abroad : not only His divine Hand, His Voice, His glance could work wonders, but even His vestment partook of these life-giving powers. Jesus is still with us : this same sacramental virtue is not extinct. The sacred species in the Divine Eucharist are for us, the vestment of the Holy Humanity of Jesus; which should be touched with profound humility, mingled with entire confidence. How is it that we do not, like the poor woman in the Gospel, profit by the grace of touching the vestment of Jesus? Is it not perhaps, because we have not such a certain conviction of His power, and of our needs? We touch Jesus as the crowd touched Him : hence it comes to pass that so often many who approach Jesus, and even touch Him sacramentally, remain stagnant in their state of imperfection, there being no diminution of their defects—their spiritual infirmities. We present ourselves before Him, but where is our childlike act of faith? Fervent souls know how to take hold of the *hem of His garment* with humble confidence, and they never fail to obtain their desires ; their maladies are cured, their strength is renewed, their hearts are comforted. And our Lord knowing that virtue has gone out from Him, looks with delight upon those whose faith has drawn it forth. How wonderful Thou art, O Jesus ! in this Sacrament of union and of love. Happy the soul that approaches It, putting aside all distractions, all human respect, all else but that one thought, which enfolds within itself the acts of faith, and hope, and love : *It is He—My God.*

COLLOQUY.

Oh ! that I might humble myself indeed, O Adorable Lord, as I remember my imperfect confidence and the tepidity of my feelings when I present myself in Thy

Presence. How often, how very often, have I failed in faith and reverence, when I have, as a matter of routine, and with coldness, approached Thine Altar. Give me, O Jesus, that childlike faith, and reverent love which obtains from Thee both grace and benediction. Let me better appreciate the happiness of participating in Thine own virtues, which I know Thou wilt accord to me, if I confide in Thy power and love, and ask of Thee this grace in Holy Communion.

RESOLUTION.

To approach the Holy Sacrament of the Altar with childlike faith and reverent love.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

If I shall but touch His garment, I shall be whole.

PRAYER.

Soul of Christ.

Sixth Week after Pentecost.—Tuesday.

The cure of the Palsied Man.

They came to Jesus, bringing one sick of the palsy, who was carried by four. And when they could not offer him unto Jesus for the multitude, they uncovered the roof where He was, and let down the bed wherein the man sick of the palsy lay.—S. MARK II.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent to ourselves the house into which our Lord has entered, filled with persons attracted thither by His Presence. The sick man is lowered down before Him, through the roof.

II. PRELUDE.

Inspire in us, O Lord; a confidence worthy of Thy power and goodness, such as may merit to obtain the cure of our souls.

I. POINT.

In this palsied man we see the figure of a tepid soul.

The pitiable condition of this sick man, lying on his couch, deprived of voluntary movement, is the image of a tepid and cowardly soul. We see this in three ways specially—in his weakness—his inaction—his inability to enjoy the advantages of health. In his weakness:—the tepid soul has neither the courage to meet the least attack from an enemy, nor the strength to bear up under the slightest trial; and what is still more, it often falls into a state of absolute prostration, and will do nothing to raise itself again. In his inaction:—this soul cannot make a single step in the way of holiness; all its powers being benumbed, it is motionless for good. In his inability to enjoy the advantages of health:—the light and inspirations of grace are not noticeable to the palsied soul: deprived of health and vigour, it cannot enter into the enjoyment of heavenly consolations, cannot take its part aright in the advantageous practice of prayer—of mortification,—and the higher exercises of piety—the observance of holy rules—of the evan-

gelical counsels. It practically pronounces all to be insipid: it cannot perceive the pleasures of religion. How dangerous is the condition of such a soul! it suffers indeed, but without merit. But why remain in this pitiable state of spiritual torpor?

II. POINT.

Jesus can be reached by a hearty desire, and good will.

If we have not, on account of our blameworthy powerlessness, gained access to our Lord, together with those who have followed Him more closely—more bravely—now is the moment to make an unusual effort of the will; to humbly accept the help of others, in order to find ourselves at the Feet of our Saviour. He is in our midst still; we know how and where to seek Him. Are we not ready to do anything, however troublesome, painful, or humiliating, rather than keep Him waiting in vain? Do we not know that He is still saying: *I am come that you may have life, and may have it more abundantly.* We may feel confident that He would not have us to be outcasts; no! He desires rather to attract us into His Presence. It is high time to throw off the unhappy restraint which on our side has grown up, and kept us aloof from Him. Notwithstanding the patience and long-suffering of our God, there has been, to many souls, a last time for Him to repeat: *Now is the acceptable time, now is the day of salvation.* Can it be that there will be such a last time for any of us? A last time for Jesus to stand and wait—a last time for Him to speak to us, to put into our minds by His Holy Spirit, good and holy desires—a last time for Him to offer us a renewal of health and strength—a last time for Him to shew His readiness to forgive our injuries against Himself, by our lukewarmness,

our negligence, our rejection of His loving invitations. Let the sight of the palsied man, as he is being lowered down through the roof, animate us to adopt the very strongest measures—to do violence to ourselves—rather than lose another opportunity, of approaching Jesus so that He may restore to us the power of rising from a state of lethargy; and of glorifying God, by using the restored health of our soul in His service.

COLLOQUY.

O my Saviour, I have great cause to reproach myself for my tepidity in Thy service ! Notwithstanding Thy warnings, and Thy invitations that I should go to Thee more constantly for grace, whereby my soul may be invigorated, yet I often run the risk of its becoming palsied by my unconcern and procrastination. I find myself to-day at Thy Feet, with a firm resolve to be less slothful, less disposed to yield to that spiritual inactivity which renders me indolent in Thy service. Energise me by Thy word of power : *Arise*—in proof of Thy forgiveness : *and walk*—in proof of the restoration of strength by which Thou wilt enable me to advance in holiness.

RESOLUTION.

Always to take necessary measures for the prevention of a relapse into indifference and tepidity.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Arise and walk.

PRAYER.

Our Father, and Hail Mary,

Sixth Week after Pentecost.—Wednesday.

The Cure of the Palsied Man (continued).

When Jesus had seen the faith of those who carried the sick of the palsy: He saith to him: Son, thy sins are forgiven thee: Arise, take up thy bed, and go into thy house: And immediately he arose, and went his way in the sight of all.—
S. MARK II.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent to ourselves Jesus in the midst of the crowd—His evident approval of the charity of those who brought the palsied man before Him—His manner of working this miracle.

II. PRELUDE.

O Good Jesus, give to us so ardent a charity that nothing may disconcert it; bless our endeavours to be useful to others.

I. POINT.

The four principal characteristics of Christian charity.

Firstly: charity is obliging and kind towards everyone; but more particularly towards the unfortunate, to whom it brings assistance with all possible haste and energy; as we see in the case of those who carried out the sick man's wish to be presented to the notice of Jesus; he being unable to help himself. Secondly: charity is ingenious in finding out the right means for the execution of her undertakings. The

bearers of the sick man could not, by ordinary means, get near to Jesus, in consequence of the crowd that surrounded Him; so they devised two expedients to overcome this difficulty—one was to mount upon the roof, and uncover it, —the other to lower the bed whereon the man lay, down into the room in which Jesus was. We cannot but notice the significance of these actions: the one of elevating, the other of lowering. They are two means by which the soul approaches God: by the former it is raised above created objects, in order more easily to find its way to Him; by the latter it descends into its own nothingness, beneath all creatures, and then it finds God to be the basis—the sure Foundation of all things. Thirdly: charity is laborious: she undertakes all, bears the burden of others, supports trouble, and trial, and fatigue, with a strength which is supernatural. Fourthly: charity is victorious: she arrives at the end of her enterprises successfully, because she is upheld by an invincible courage, and by this she can surmount all that opposes itself to her designs. Thus it was with the charity that assisted the palsied man, which, united to faith, obtained for him health of both body and soul. If our charity were real, what might we not do in gaining souls for God?

II. POINT.

How the Son of God blessed and rewarded this charity, which was the fruit of faith.

Jesus looked through the charity displayed by the friends of the sick man, and saw the faith which prompted it. Then He said to him: *Son, thy sins are forgiven thee.* How manifestly our Lord shewed His appreciation of this faith in Himself, and charity towards him whom now He healed.

We observe that His primary consideration is for the soul. *He knows what is in man*, and which of his needs is the most pressing. He first then pronounces absolution before all the people, to evidence the power which He, as Son of Man, has to forgive sins ; as well as to make them understand the higher value of the soul. Immediately afterwards He grants the less essential things, which they have asked of Him. We see the wonderful results of charity ; how it draws down blessings on those on behalf of whom it is exercised. This encourages us to work, and above all, to perform that act of purest charity—to pray for the temporal, and especially the spiritual well-being of others. And let us not fail to ask this charitable help for ourselves—of those particularly who have entered within the Realms of perfect Love, and whose intercessions will surely win for us, in whom they are interested, blessings as great as those obtained by the charity of the palsied man's friends. Let us ask the prayers of our friends, both on earth and in Paradise ; but chiefly of our Mother Mary, Saint Joseph, and our patron Saints, begging of them to bring our case before the special notice of our Lord, Who surely will be moved by such pleading, and will extend to us, their clients, the highest benedictions of His love and favour.

COLLOQUY.

O Sacred Heart of Jesus, inexhaustible Fountain whence the Saints have drawn their ardent charity towards God and man, I come to Thee. Give me a true and loving interest in the welfare of those with whom I come in contact : by my example, my actions, my prayers, may I bring them into Thy Presence, so that they may rejoice therein, and obtain the graces they most need. May I myself trust also in the charity of others, and often ask the assistance of their

intercessions. And to Thy dear Mother, O Jesus, to Saint Joseph, to my patron Saints, do I commend my cause. To Thee may they pray for me.

RESOLUTION.

To strive to become more truly charitable.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Charity is patient—is kind.

PRAYER.

O Jesus, living in Mary.

Sixth Week after Pentecost.—Thursday.

The warning given by Jesus to the infirm Man whom He healed at Jerusalem on the Sabbath-day.

Afterwards JESUS findeth him in the Temple, and saith to him: Behold thou art made whole: sin no more, lest some worse thing happen to thee.—S. JOHN V.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us remember how Jesus healed this man who had suffered from his infirmity thirty-eight years, by the side of the pond called Probatica, on the Sabbath: meeting him afterwards in the Temple, He warned Him against relapsing into sin.

II. PRELUDE.

Deign, O Lord, to fill us with lively gratitude for the mercy Thou hast shewn us in pardoning our sins, and preserve us from falling back into them.

I. POINT.

The thought of the benefits we have received from God is a powerful motive for avoiding sin.

When a sinner falls again and again into sin, he insults the majesty of God, and increases the weight of that chastisement which he already deserves; but when one whose offence God has graciously pardoned, lightly multiplies his faults—his infidelities, it is the love of his Divine Saviour that is outraged, and it is to be feared that this be one day changed into formidable justice. *Behold thou art made whole: sin no more.* To enable ourselves to abide by this injunction, we should, as Saint Francis de Sales tells us, “form as vivid an idea as possible of all the sad effects of sin, so that compunction of heart may incite us to be really and deeply contrite. It is true that however feeble contrition may be, provided it be sincere, it is sufficient to purify our souls from sin, especially when it is sustained by the virtue of the Sacrament of Penance; but where contrition is intense and penetrative, it goes so far as to purify the heart from all the evil inclinations which lead to sin. Therefore, when a penitent conceives only a slight horror of his sins—has but a feeble contrition for them—if this hatred and this contrition be real, he, in good faith, determines not to sin again. But if his hatred be most intense, his sorrow most profound, he will detest sin effectively—every evil habit and dangerous attraction—all, in

fact, which might induce a repetition of any fault, great or small. To our sorrow we should give all the strength and comprehensiveness possible, so that it may reach to all the circumstances of sin : thus it was that the Magdalene, from the first moment of her conversion, lost so entirely all taste for the vain pleasures of her former life, that she retained no recollection of them ; her soul being perfectly renewed in holiness. Do we, with King David, say from the bottom of our hearts : *I hate and abhor iniquity, and every path of iniquity ?*

II. POINT.

A relapse into any habit of sin is most dangerous.

Sin no more, lest some worse thing happen to thee. By these words Jesus would warn us of the fatal consequences attendant on the abuse of His merciful goodness ; they make us realise the justice of the punishment merited by those who fall voluntarily into a repetition of sins, which have been once pardoned. We should remark that it is not a question here of such sins as immediately kill the soul ; since it was not from death that our Saviour delivered this man, but from a state of infirmity, which predisposed him to succumb at any time to a severer assault of his disease. Indifference about those frequent sins which keep the soul so weak, often leads to fatal results. *Some worse thing*—farther separation from God—is taking place each day and hour, in such a life ; until, at length, it may end in final separation. Let us never imitate those who, through a want of due seriousness and of real gratitude, seem only to seek pardon of their faults to commit them anew with greater freedom, with more assurance. It is true that the chastisements inflicted by our Father, Who is as compassionate as He is just, do not fall suddenly upon the first offences of the guilty : He

gives them time for repentance, and opportunities of being restored to His friendship. He usually withdraws first His choicest favours, the clear illumination of His grace, His extraordinary assistance. If such a withdrawal appear to awaken no regret—no alarm—then He proceeds to threaten more manifestly, and all this to avert the worst thing which can happen—final impenitence. . . . After each confession we make, Jesus says : *Sin no more*—put aside the habit of committing any fault, however excusable it may appear—it is the deliberate failures that are an injury to Me, thy Saviour.

COLLOQUY.

O my Jesus, preserve me from all deliberate faults, lest I lose Thy grace. Too well I know that I have deserved to be punished for the ingratitude I have been guilty of, when I have fallen back into sins from which Thy pardoning love had freed my conscience. Help me to avoid the voluntary repetition of my faults by recalling Thy words of warning to my mind : *Sin no more, lest a worse thing happen to thee*—a temporary withdrawal of My favour—a diminution of My illuminating grace. Let not such an evil befall me, O Redeemer of my soul. Accept my goodwill, and firm resolve to be more faithful.

RESOLUTION.

To be careful not to relapse into faults which have been habitual.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

If sins have no dominion over me, then shall I be without spot.

PRAYER.

Soul of Christ.

Sixth Week after Pentecost.—Friday.

Jesus stills the Tempest at Sea.

JESUS was in a ship with His Disciples : and there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship : And JESUS was sleeping : They awake Him and say to Him : Master, doth it not concern Thee that we perish.—S. MARK IV.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us imagine that we see the stormy sea, raging furiously: the Disciples are seized with alarm; but Jesus, the Sovereign Lord of nature, remains in a state of calm repose.

II. PRELUDE.

O Good Master, grant that comprehending Thy purposes of mercy, in permitting the troubles which often arise in our souls, we may have more entire confidence in Thee.

I. POINT.

God permits, for the sanctification of His elect, the storms that are encountered in the spiritual life.

We learn from the Gospel, that even in the Presence of Jesus we are not exempt from vicissitudes in our spiritual life: the soul may be disquieted—the mind perturbed. Often a storm arises, when we least expect it. Fears, temptations, troubles come upon us from all quarters, and threaten to overwhelm the soul; like the waves of a rough sea which seem as if they must inevitably submerge the frail bark upon it. But

whence come these waves? At whose command do they arise? Who permits their rage to be vented against us? They are obedient to the Will of God: in the midst of their fury, *He measures them in the hollow of His hand*, and knows exactly how far we can, by the strength of His power, stand up against their weight. Jesus in His desire for our perfection will have us to encounter such storms, that He may prove our fidelity. The most saintly souls are sometimes sorely tried: they are almost overwhelmed by sadness—or have to bear the shock of trials and temptations. God is purifying them from every imperfection, by means so divinely wise, that it is beyond the reach of human wisdom to comprehend and appreciate them. He leaves them without sensible help and consolation in the midst of tribulation; He tries them, to see if they will stretch forth their hands confidently towards Him, in the hour of darkness and of tempest, for guidance and protection. Although deprived of the clear sunshine of His smile, it is but for a little season:—the heavy clouds of trouble will soon have passed away—already they are breaking, the light of consolation is reappearing, the raging of the waters will quickly cease, and the trusting soul exultingly exclaim: *O Lord God of Hosts, who is like to Thee? Thou art mighty, O Lord, Who rulest the power of the sea, and appeasest the motion of the waves thereof. God is my Saviour, I will deal confidently and will not fear.*

II. POINT.

The apparent sleep of Jesus should produce in us greater fervour.

Whilst the storm lasts we must not let our heart grow discouraged, as if the Good Master of the ship were not there. He is all the while reposing in the quiet resting-place

afforded Him, in the superior part of the soul—therefore it cannot be wrecked. What have we, under these circumstances, to fear? If He were not really there, we should doubtless perish—but He is there, and we know it. As Saint Paul says: *We can do all things through Him who strengtheneth us.* And there are also those other words of his, which shew us how he confided in the divine strength, when the storms of adversity beat high. *I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may dwell in me: For when I am weak, then am I powerful.* Let us enter into this thought of the Apostle's; learning from him to humble ourselves—to feel our weakness—and to rejoice, so to speak, in our own nothingness. When we know how to reject all vain thoughts of ourselves, we shall have peace; and what can trouble the peace of such as forget or despise self, and lean solely on God, Who has said by His prophet: *When thou shalt pass through the waters, I will be with thee?* If Jesus appear to sleep in the midst of the storm—that is to say, if He does not deliver us from the seeming danger directly we pray, it is because He would excite in us greater fervour—try our faith to the utmost—and then shew the greatness of His power on our behalf. During these moments of delay, we may make the words of David our own: *Arise, why sleepest Thou, O Lord? help us and redeem us for Thy Name's sake.* And at the right moment, for our greater merit and His greater glory, He will awake, and will speak; saying to the waves of temptation, and winds of adversity; *Peace, be still.*

COLLOQUY.

If Thou, O my divine Master, wouldst restore perfect peace to my soul in which Thou dwellest, when it has been tempest-tossed by trials and tribulations, Thou hast but to

speak the word : *Be still*. But if Thou art pleased to leave me apparently to the mercy of the waves, I know I may rest assured that in reality, Thou art not for a moment forgetful of, nor insensible to, my suffering. Teach me the deeper secrets of Thy divine charity ; give me a grateful appreciation of its mysterious action and design, in my regard. And however tempestuous the rest of my life's voyage may sometimes be, let me glorify Thee by a calmer patience and more perfect submission.

RESOLUTION.

Through whatever trials it may please God that I should pass, to accept them with patient resignation.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

They were in danger, and came and awaked Jesus.

PRAYER.

Take, O Lord, and receive.

Sixth Week after Pentecost.—Saturday.

Jesus raises to life the daughter of Jairus.

One of the rulers of the synagogue came to JESUS, and seeing Him, fell down at His feet. And he besought Him saying: My daughter is at the point of death ; come, lay Thy hand upon her, that she may be safe and may live Some came from the ruler's house, saying: Thy daughter is dead. JESUS saith to him: Fear not, only believe JESUS entered in where the daughter was lying, and taking her

by the hand He saith to her: Talitha cumi: And immediately the damsel rose up and walked.—S. MARK V.

I. PRELUDE.

We may in spirit, with Jesus, and her father and mother, enter the room where the young girl is lying dead.

II. PRELUDE.

The miraculous event upon which we are to meditate, causes us to understand the power of Thy word, O God, over death itself. May we, by Thy grace, never *sleep in death*.

I. POINT.

Jesus performs the miracle of raising from the dead, to life and health.

Let us contemplate our Lord as He continues to dispense His gifts of healing. He has been occupied in curing every kind of disease; the devils have been forced to own and obey His power; and now a case arises in which He is entreated to come to the bed-side of a young girl, who is too ill to be carried to Him. Her afflicted father, a ruler of the synagogue, kneels before Jesus; and makes known his request, with all the loving anxiousness of one who fears to lose his child. *He besought Him much.* Is this the manner of our prayer? Do we beseech God much? *Come lay Thy Hand upon her*, he says, *that she may be safe.* Have we the simple faith of Jairus? Jesus at once consented to accompany him. They who walk in the company of our Lord, must be ready to share in the reproach and contempt which are heaped upon Him, by those who doubt His power. Immediately after the father had made known His request,

a messenger announced that the child was dead, and implied that it would be foolish on the part of Jairus, to believe that Jesus could yet deliver him from his affliction. It was permitted that he should feel the anguish of bereavement, but only that his faith might be further tried—that they who mocked at his credulity might be completely silenced—and the power of the Divine Master over death itself manifested. Most true is it that “man’s extremity is God’s opportunity”. No disappointment can be keener than the disappointment of reviving hopes. As we dwell upon the words: *Thy daughter is dead, why dost thou trouble the Master any further?* let us question ourselves as to how we bear disappointments, want of sympathy, unmerited reproof? Do we allow ourselves to be so disturbed that we fail to hear our Lord’s kind sustaining words: *Fear not, only believe:* the world may *laugh you and Me to scorn*, but as you are partakers of My humiliations, so shall you be also partakers of My joy.

II. POINT.

The damsel is not dead, but sleepeth.

Jesus chose that only the father and mother, and three of His Disciples should be eye-witnesses of this miracle of raising from the dead. He would reward the parents’ faith in Himself—as being the Son of God—and confirm that of the Apostles. But when He intends to confer His special graces, the tumult, the curiosity, the excitement of the world may not intrude upon, and disturb the silent awe which enshrouds the operations of grace. *She is not dead.* In her we see the figure of a soul that is in the sleep of spiritual death, which may be temporary, and from which a miracle of grace can awaken it. The energy of the Divine Voice

can reach the soul in such a case ; and how many can bear testimony to this, in the words of the great Apostle : *But God, Who is rich in mercy, for His exceeding charity wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together in Christ and raised us up.* If Jairus had not called on Jesus for help, his daughter would not have been restored to him. Should we ever fall under the deadening effects of the withdrawal of God's grace, should we have cause to fear that another's soul is being overcome by the fatal sleep of spiritual lifelessness, may we quickly recal that quiet scene when God the Son gave back life to the daughter of Jairus, in answer to his prayer of faith. Rising without delay let us find Jesus, and *beseech Him much* to say to the tepid, lifeless soul, *Arise.* When resuscitated it needs much care and nourishment, and freedom from excited feelings. It is therefore recorded for our instruction, that after the miracle had been performed *Jesus charged them strictly that no man should know it : and commanded that something should be given her to eat.*

COLLOQUY.

How can I thank Thee as I ought, O my Saviour, for having restored life and vigour to my soul by the almighty power of Thy grace. *Enlighten the eyes of my soul, that I never sleep in death.* What gratitude do I not owe Thee ! What faith should I not have in making known my request for the spiritual resurrection of other souls ! Keep the example of the ruler of the synagogue before my mind, so that I may imitate his faith, while I admire Thy condescension, O Jesus, and Thy goodness.

RESOLUTION.

To pray much that dead souls may be raised to life.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

He besought Him much.

PRAYER.

Our Father, and Hail Mary.

FESTIVALS.

Saint Aloysius.

The example of Holy Purity, given by Saint Aloysius.

As for him that is pure, his work is right.—PROV. XXI.

I. PRELUDE.

We represent to ourselves Saint Aloysius at the foot of our Lady's Altar, consecrating himself to God, at the age of seven years.

II. PRELUDE.

O Saint of God, how beautiful in His eyes was thy pure angelic life ! Obtain for us that same purity of heart, that we too may please Him.

I. POINT.

The angelic purity of Saint Aloysius.

Of all the privileges with which God favoured this Saint, there was one which rendered his life on earth similar to that of the Angels. Endowed with the virtue of holy purity,

he cherished it in such a pre-eminent degree, that no spot ever tarnished, for a single instant, its fair lustre. Under the auspices of the Queen of Virgins, in his childhood he offered to God the sacrifice of his body, heart, and mind—engaging himself, by vow, to preserve them in inviolable chastity. If this virtue in him was so remarkable, the care that he took to preserve it was none the less admirable. Like the holy Angels, he was exempt from temptations against it, and yet he practised severe bodily austerities: never assailed by wrong thoughts, he, notwithstanding, performed daily penances, avoided every possible occasion of evil, and exercised himself in the most perfect modesty. What an example is presented to us in the person of this young Saint! we may dwell in contemplation upon the unsullied innocence of his beautiful soul, and consider the power he had over his body; his every movement was in accordance with religious decorum—every gesture bespoke his innate love of the angelic virtue. No unruly passion disturbed his heart, the affections of which were centred in God immutably. Well may we to-day, whilst we excite in ourselves the firm purpose of following his example better, ask Saint Aloysius to obtain for us the grace to preserve innocency of life, and a greater love for that modesty which is the safeguard of holy purity.

II. POINT.

The manner in which Saint Aloysius guarded holy purity in himself, merited the recompense of familiar intercourse with God.

A second great privilege which this Saint received from Heaven, and which was a consequence of the first, was the absolute exemption from all wandering thoughts during

prayer. The Well-Beloved, Who delighteth to remain amongst the lilies—in pure hearts, and minds—communicated Himself so intimately to the heart and mind of Saint Aloysius, that his intercourse with Him was uninterrupted. If we but acted habitually and uniformly in the spirit of holiness, to which we are called, keeping up to that degree of sanctity demanded by our vocation, we too should be continually united to God in prayer. “But what a contrast between the Saint of to-day and myself!” each one of us may justly exclaim: our insensibility, our want of alacrity, our weariness in regard to our communications with our Lord, render us so different from him. “Sanctify me also—make a saint of me!” should be our heartfelt ejaculation, as we think what His grace has wrought in those who have been clean of heart: such see God even in this life—yes! see Him in every circumstance of every hour, and speak with Him as with a familiar friend. Why are our hearts so little occupied with God? so cold towards Him? so empty of divine love? The reply is obvious. Purity of heart—union with Jesus—these we find to be synonymous, as we study the history of the Saints. The one also is the counterpoise of the other in the spiritual life, steadying the tendencies of the soul in holiness and justice. If we have the same fear of committing the least offence against Him, *Whose eyes are too pure to behold evil, and Who cannot look on iniquity*, as Saint Aloysius had, and the same unwearing love of prayer, we too shall become saints.

COLLOQUY.

O happy Saint! I rejoice with thee on account of the great privileges, which were thine throughout thy life-time; and because of the glory to which thou art elevated in Paradise. I beseech thee to interest thyself in my favour,

and to obtain for me that virtue which is rightly called angelic. Ask also for me that I may become more habitually reserved—religiously recollected. Imitating thee, I will strive after a closer union with God, and watch with greater vigilance over my heart and senses ; so that one day I may meet thee in the Home of the Elect.

RESOLUTION.

To follow the example of Saint Aloysius as nearly as I can ; often asking his intercession.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

As the Angels of God in Heaven.

PRAYER.

O Jesus, living in Mary.

Nativity of Saint John-the-Baptist.

The greatness and humility of Saint John-the-Baptist.

And thou child, shalt be called the Prophet of the Highest.—

S. LUKE I.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us recal the prodigies which accompanied the birth of Saint John-the-Baptist, and his life in the desert from his earliest years : let us think of the extraordinary penance he practised.

II. PRELUDE.

May we, O great Saint, by thy assistance, advance in the acquirement of those virtues, which in thee merited singular favours from Heaven.

I. POINT.

Saint John-the-Baptist was truly great.

If we ask of Saint John, as did the messengers of the priests and Levites, *Who art Thou?* he seems to take us into his confidence, and replies: *I am the Friend of the Bridegroom.* And Jesus thus spoke of him: *He was a bright and shining light.* Yes! He was that bright and shining light which appeared, to herald the Visit of *the Orient from on high.* From all eternity God had so ordained that *many should rejoice in his nativity*; and He willed that general attention should be attracted by the message of preparation he was to bear to those, who looked for the Messias; and for this purpose: that they who watched the rising of this star of grace, on the hitherto dark horizon, might be drawn to observe the first rays of the Sun of Justice, which increasing in splendour, would hereafter enlighten the whole world. An Archangel had been sent from Heaven to announce to Zachary that his son *should be great before the Lord.* How wonderful was the mission to which he was called! how correspondingly marvellous were the graces bestowed on this *child of joy and gladness*, by which he was sanctified, and fitted for the high service God required of him! He was indeed truly great! It is in fact difficult to form a just conception of the greatness of his vocation, and of his faithfulness to it.—Even before his birth, he was filled with the Holy Ghost; and the holiness of his life distinguished

him to such a degree from other men, that many began to question as to whether he were not the expected Messias.— Then it was, to prevent them from regarding him otherwise than as a messenger, appointed to announce the Coming of One mightier than he, that he publicly declared : *I am not the Christ.* He would screen himself from notoriety, by insisting on the greatness of Him Whose way he had to prepare. So perfectly did he carry out the designs with which God entrusted him, that just before he was permitted to win the crown of martyrdom, our Blessed Lord bestowed on him this high eulogium : *Amen, I say to you, there hath not risen among them that are born of women, a greater than John-the-Baptist.* He was not only a prophet, but more than a prophet—another Elias—in the spirit and power of whom he fulfilled the work God gave him to do. Are we, each one according to his ability, preparing the way for the Second Coming of Jesus? are we indeed friends of the Bridegroom also?

II. POINT.

The profound humility of Saint John-the-Baptist.

By the side of his greatness we place his humility, which so much enhanced it. The circumstances connected with his birth, and those of his whole life, formed a perpetual miracle. From his very childhood he lived in the desert, practising austere penance until the day of his manifestation as the preacher of repentance. He passed, as it were, his novitiate alone with God, and thus learned perfectly what to say and do, in order to fulfil his mission. He attracted observation by the sanctity of his life, but he was untouched by vain-glory; and referred the honour they would have given him, to the True Messias. Of the world's opinion he

made no account ; his opinion of himself found expression in those words of humility : *There cometh after me One, the latchets of Whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and loose. He must increase, but I must decrease.* Resisting all movements of pride, he gave to Jesus the glory which was due only to Him. In all we know of him, this desire seems to predominate: that the Son of God should be recognised and honoured, and himself forgotten and despised. The beauty of humility lies in its reality. How most beautiful then is the humility of this Forerunner of Jesus—this Patriarch of anchorites—this Preacher of repentance—this Martyr to chastity. In the house of Zachary, in the retirement of the wilderness, by the banks of the Jordan, in the midst of his disciples, in Herod's royal court, in the prison-dungeon at the mercy of the vindictive Herodias, Saint John-the-Baptist is an example of greatness of soul and of deep humility. May we have grace, through his intercession, to refer all honour and glory to Him to Whom it is justly due ; attracting none—reserving none for ourselves.

COLLOQUY.

Divine Saviour, Author of every grace, I adore Thee for having bestowed on Thy Forerunner so many privileges, and rejoice as I consider the honour and glory he procured for Thee, by the sanctity of his life, the lustre of his virtues, and the grandeur of the mission with which Thou didst entrust him. On this, the Day of his Nativity, I think of the joy and gladness of Zachary and Elizabeth ; and unite with them in praising and blessing Thee *for having visited, and wrought the redemption of, Thy people.* May the intercession of Saint John avail with Thee, O Lord, on my behalf to-day ; that I may be prepared, and may help others in their

preparation, to behold the Lamb of God as He shall stand upon Mount Sion, together with all the Saints.

RESOLUTION.

To live only to advance the honour and glory of God.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Many shall rejoice in his nativity, for he shall be great before the Lord.

PRAYER.

O Jesus, living in Mary.

Saint Peter.

Saint Peter is the Rock on which the Holy Church is built.

Thou art Peter: and upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.—
S. MATT. XVI.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent to ourselves Jesus alone with His Disciples. He asks them: *Whom do you say that I am?* And when Simon Peter replies: *Thou art Christ—the Son of the living God*, Jesus says: *Thou art Peter—the rock on which I will build My Church.*

II. PRELUDE.

O holy Apostle ! obtain for us the grace to confess our belief in Jesus, by our words and actions ; to love Him and confide in Him as thou didst.

I. POINT.

Confidence and love of Saint Peter, towards Him Whose representative on earth he was to be.

We might pause to consider the unwavering fidelity, the profound humility, the continual penance of the Prince of the Apostles : we might dwell upon the zeal which undertook the conquest of the world for our Lord : or the courage, which animating him and his fellow-labourers, effected the building up of the Church, according to the plan given by the Divine Architect. But let us meditate to-day on the two chief means, whereby he executed this vast design. These were, his confidence and his love. Jesus destined him to be the Head of the Church—His Vicar—after His departure from the earth. He had often drawn forth his simple avowal of faith, his sincere protestation of love : both love and faith were to be put to the test during a life-time of labour, and trial, and persecution ; and in the hour of martyrdom. Love was the vanquisher in every strife, faith was triumphant ! How often did Saint Peter heroically throw himself into some sea of difficulty, as he recalled the time, when his faith being yet weak, he had said : *Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come to Thee upon the waters*, and had found Jesus so strong to help and to save ! How often did divine charity prompt him to toil and to endure, as he remembered that thrice-repeated inquiry : *Simon, lovest thou Me ?* Was he not thinking of its sequel

when he wrote to the Priests of the Church : *Feed the flock of God : taking care of it.* If we rightly, carefully consider these two characteristics of Saint Peter, we too shall learn from him how to love our Lord above all things else ; to confide in Him, especially when also called to be *partakers of His sufferings.* Jesus bestowed many marks of His favour on Saint Peter : was not the best reserved as the last?—the Cross.

II. POINT.

Jesus honoured Saint Peter.

The Divine Master bestowed on this Apostle the highest privileges, and confided to him the most honourable functions. He chose him to be the foundation-stone of that spiritual edifice, of which He is Himself the Corner-stone. He gave him supreme authority, and nominated him as His Representative on earth—to take His place in the government of His Church. What earthly greatness, what worldly distinction is comparable to the position of honour, in which Saint Peter found himself placed, by the Divine Dispenser of all power in Heaven and earth? Saint Peter was clothed with His Divine authority, invested with His rights, and charged to feed His sheep and His lambs : that is to say all—within the Fold of the Holy Church. To him He entrusted the Keys of the kingdom of Heaven. Jesus, honoured His delegate : lavished on him so many favours, evidenced so high a regard for him, not only out of His own personal love and regard, but likewise to inspire us with deep veneration for His appointed Vicar, and for each one of his successors who should be called by Him to fill that office. We owe a respectful and entire obedience to the Sovereign Pontiff : and the highest honour we can render to Saint Peter to-day, is to renew in ourselves our attachment

to the Holy See. How unspeakably thankful should we be to our Lord, that we, as members of the Catholic Church, can look up to, revere, and obey that Shepherd and Bishop of our souls, under whose wise care He places us. The Keys of the kingdom of Heaven are in the keeping of the Representative of Christ Jesus, to Whom be glory in the Church into all generations.

COLLOQUY.

O Jesus, King of Ages, Immortal, Invisible, I thank Thee, with my whole heart, that Thou didst appoint Thine Apostle, Saint Peter, to be Thy Representative,—the visible Head of the Church. He recognised with firm faith the Divinity which dwelt in Thee, and loving Thee with characteristic ardour, was ready to brave all hardships and dangers in support of Thy cause. O Prince of the Apostles! thy Dear Master conferred on thee most marvellous powers: I invoke thee with fullest confidence, knowing that thou canst and wilt use them in my behalf. May the shadow of thy favour rest upon me, so that I may be renewed in spiritual strength; and enabled to love and serve Jesus in His beloved Church all my life. O Saint Peter, and Saint Paul, eternally united in heaven as on this day, pray for me.

RESOLUTION.

To renew my attachment and submission to the Successor of Saint Peter, with due thankfulness.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

This day the Keeper of Heaven's Keys went on his way to Christ, with joy.

PRAYER.

Our Father, and Hail Mary.

Commemoration of Saint Paul.

Fidelity to grace, Saint Paul's special characteristic.

I am not worthy to be called an Apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God: by the grace of God, I am what I am; and His grace in me hath not been void.—I. COR. XV.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent to ourselves Saint Paul, as he travelled towards Damascus, hearing our Lord say to him: *I am Jesus*: and listen to his instant inquiry, *Lord! what wilt Thou have me to do?*

II. PRELUDE.

O Jesus, by the all-powerful grace of Thy Holy Name, Thou didst make of a bitter persecutor a zealous Apostle: do Thou possess our hearts, and render them obedient to Thy Holy Will.

I. POINT.

The great fidelity to grace observable in the Apostle of the Gentiles.

Let us consider the marvellous effusion of grace shed forth by God on this illustrious convert. Thus he speaks of himself: *Who before was a blasphemer, a persecutor, and contumelious: But I obtained the mercy of God, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief: Now the grace of our Lord hath abounded exceedingly, with faith and love which is in*

Christ Jesus. Whilst we admire the astounding goodness of Jesus towards this Apostle, we should thank Him also for having given him to be our guide in spiritual things. We cannot do better than study the evangelical maxims laid down by this great master of the spiritual life; and regulate our lives by the standard of his example. All the Saints have felt the attractiveness of his epistles: as we read them, let us ask God to open to us also the treasures of His mercy, to convert us to a perfect life: the treasures of His wisdom, that we may be *wise in good and simple in evil*: the treasures of his power, that we may be strengthened in Him. Those first words in which our Lord announced Himself to the future Apostle of the Gentiles, form the key-note of his preaching—of his writings: he declares that: *he knew only Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.* He was faithful to that first invitation: he arose in the strength of the Holy Name, disengaged himself from ties of kindred, and cast aside the fetters of the world and of human respect. From the hour of his conversion until that of his martyrdom, he indeed *dealt confidently in the Name of Jesus.* O Lord, make Thyself known to us; and listen to the intercessions of Thy Saint, as he asks for us grace to be faithful to the commands Thou dost lay upon us. As thou didst choose him to carry Thy Name before the world, so choose us to do the same; and aided by the example of his fidelity, instructed by his writings, may we like him be ready to suffer for Its sake.

II. POINT.

I have finished my course—I have kept the faith.

How was it that Saint Paul could so confidently make this assertion, which we fancy we hear him repeating on his way to receive the crown of martyrdom, that was awaiting

him. His conscience bore him witness that *he had fought a good fight*.—How holy a use he had made of the grace of God! what he preached he really practised. We cannot number the acts of heroism in regard to humility, poverty, patience, confidence, and zeal which he performed: we cannot fully realise to what an extent he despised the things of this world; and longed to be with Christ. Where are our heroic acts of virtue? Can we say with him: *I am ready to be sacrificed?* If we too would win the crown, we too must not flinch from the combat: if we put aside the chalice and the cross, we put aside our crown also. Let us think what we are doing! What a glorious fight Saint Paul sustained against the flesh, the devil, the powers of the world, the malice of the Jews, the envy of false brethren—in the midst of daily persecution! Are we able to rejoice when assailed by such adversaries, as he did? and in the midst of conflicts, can we say with him: *In all these things we overcome, because of Him that hath loved us?* May our prayer to-day be, that when the time of our dissolution is at hand, we may not fear to use the words of this glorious Apostle: *I have fought a good fight, I have kept the faith*: adding with all confidence in the promises of God: *there is laid up for me a crown of justice*.

COLLOQUY.

After meditating upon the power of Thy grace, O Jesus, and the fidelity of Thy Apostle Saint Paul, I feel drawn to imitate his faithfulness, and to confide more entirely in Thee for strength, to fulfil all that Thou demandest of me. How little did I merit Thy favour, when first Thou didst call me to carry Thy Name before the world, in obedience to my vocation. How hast Thou borne with me since then! Would that I had followed the example of Saint Paul more

perfectly! May his intercession win for me the grace—from this time forward—to *fight the good fight of faith: and lay hold on eternal life whereunto I am called.* O Saint Peter and Saint Paul, eternally united in Heaven, as on this day, pray for me.

RESOLUTION.

Faithfully to respond to the grace of my vocation.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

There is laid up for me a crown of justice.

PRAYER.

Our Father, and Hail Mary.

Visitation of the Blessed Virgin.

The charity of our Lady.

Mary, rising up, went into the hill-country with haste, into a city of Juda: And she entered into the house of Zachary, and saluted Elizabeth.—S. LUKE I.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us accompany the Mother of the Saviour, as she journeys amongst the hills, on her way to visit her cousin Elizabeth.

II. PRELUDE.

Obtain for us, O, most holy Virgin, the grace to imitate the virtues of which thou dost give us an example, in the mystery of thy Visitation.

I. POINT.

The benevolence of the Blessed Virgin in paying a visit to her cousin.

Even before the Birth of her Son, the Blessed Virgin began to be the Mediatrix between Him and mankind. She firsts visits her relations ; and what blessings result from this visit, in consequence of the presence of Jesus, Who was tabernacled in the chaste womb of His Virgin-Mother. Through her agency what gifts of grace, what benefits—eternal in their effects—were brought to the family of Saint John-the-Baptist ! He was sanctified, being yet unborn : Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost : on Zachary many blessings were conferred. Mary by her Visitation, made others to be sharers in her holy joy. Her charity was of the highest order, in its purpose and action ; and, therefore, its effects were so beneficial, so divine. How little was Mary thinking of herself as she traversed the hills of Juda—bent on her mission of love. So evident is her pure intention, that we feel as if we could read her thoughts, as we contemplate her to-day. And if we can, we shall certainly be drawn to follow her in the tract of active charity—to pass readily along difficult paths, in going to assist any who are in need of our help. Let us look for Mary's footprints, when we know that some one is depending on us for a word of comfort, a loving attention, a kindly admonition, a message from God, a recollection of the

Presence of Jesus. Our Mother desires that we should accompany her in her Visitation. We can all do so.

II. POINT.

The edification Mary gave in the house of Zachary.

Whilst the Son of Mary effected the sanctification of His Precursor, we can well imagine how Mary herself edified the household, in which she was visiting for three months. How observable must have been the extraordinary virtues she practised, and the sentiments of piety and religion she inspired. It was not enough for her to humble herself before her Creator, and the holy Angels, but also before men she would declare that she was but the Handmaid of the Lord. Elizabeth, inspired by the Holy Spirit, gave her her beautiful title of "Mother of God," but she immediately began to speak of her own lowliness; ascribed to the Lord all praise; and glorified, in her Magnificat, His adorable perfections. She made known His great mercy to mankind, and offered Him the tribute of her gratitude. Proving her real sense of humility, she waited upon—served with loving attention—her aged cousin. Thus it is, that a soul filled with the Holy Spirit despises itself, and thinks only of how to serve God in lowly ways. Do we understand how great a privilege it is, to be allowed to serve Him in the person of our neighbour? Are we edifying those with whom we have to do? What virtues are we practising? Are our conversations like Mary's, in the house of Elizabeth? Do we often speak of God? Do we, by our actions, lead others to think of Him?

COLLOQUY.

O Holy Virgin! Mother of purest charity! make me to

share in thy zeal, thy humility, thy piety, so that I may not decrease, but increase the sanctity of the household in which I find myself, by God's appointment. May the charm of thy example rest upon my employments, however lowly they may be. In a Religious, greatness consists in the fidelity with which little duties are accomplished; in a sincere desire to fill the last place; in leading a hidden life—a life of prayerful recollection. These three distinguishing traits of true greatness were observable in thee, O my Mother. May I become more like thee; by copying thy virtues, as I see and admire them.

RESOLUTION.

To imitate the true charity of Mary.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Whence is this that the Mother of my Lord should come to me?

PRAYER.

O God, Who by the Immaculate Conception.

Saint Mary Magdalene.

The Conversion of Saint Mary Magdalene.

Dost thou see this woman? She with tears hath washed My Feet, and with her hair hath wiped them. . . . She hath not ceased to kiss My Feet, and with ointment hath anointed them.—S. LUKE VII.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent to ourselves Mary Magdalene in the house of the Pharisee, where she obtained the pardon of her sins.

II. PRELUDE.

O Blessed Saint, thou hadst the happiness of hearing our Saviour say of thee: *Many sins are forgiven her, because she hath loved much*: obtain for us that we may love Him as thou didst.

I. POINT.

This holy penitent teaches us in what true contrition of heart consists.

True contrition consists of faith, hope, love, and sorrow for sin. We find all these in the repentant Magdalene, whose conversion was a triumph of grace; the triumph of the love of Jesus. Touched by his goodness, and infinite mercy, she renounced all affection for worldly things; and consecrated her love entirely to the Divine Master, Who enlightened her and recalled her from the path of error into which the world had enticed her. Are we willing to be perfectly converted, so that we no longer languish in the sad condition of having our hearts divided between God and the world? between the Creator and creatures? Let us look into ourselves, and see if anything is holding us back from loving Jesus only. Is there no interior voice reproaching us for our little generosity, with regard to the yielding up of ourselves to His service?—We see such intensity of grateful love in Saint Mary Magdalene; and she offers it wholly and entirely to the Divine Master, as she

kneels there at His Feet : every other possible object on which her affection could rest, has faded from her memory. She knows, and only cares to know, that her Saviour has accepted the outward tokens of her contrition and devotion : she feels that He has looked into the depths of her heart, and understands all. Yes ! He puts the speechless pleadings of her love and sorrow into words, exactly expressive of them : and what a relief the truth of these words affords her ! *Many sins are forgiven her, because she loved much.* When we prostrate ourselves at Jesus' Feet, and deplore our infidelities, our greatest consolation is that He can read our hearts. If indeed our love is commensurate with the greatness of our offences, then can we too put away the recollection of them, as did the Magdalene ; and listening to His absolution, keep the remembrance of His pardon only, in our minds,—and *go in peace.*

II. POINT.

Saint Mary Magdalene, after her conversion, persevered in the love of God.

The Magdalene, justified by the words of forgiveness pronounced by Jesus, remained faithful until death. Her love banished all timidity, and held her near Him, when He was hanging on the Cross—when He was lying in the Sepulchre. Fearlessly she sought Him in the Garden on Easter morning ; and strengthened by the sight of the Risen Saviour she sought Him still daily, hourly, for thirty years, within the lonely mountain cave, in wondrous contemplation,—until at length *she found Him Whom her soul loved* in the celestial Country ; and praised Him for the mercy shewn her in that hour when He had said : *Thy sins are forgiven thee.* What are our lives in comparison with hers ? Are our thoughts divided only between what we give, and what

we receive?—love the effect of pardon, and pardon the effect of love. *This* Jesus will give us without reserve: do we give *that* after the same manner? The Saint of to-day became a victim of charity, during those years of ardent longing to be reunited to her Well-Beloved. What suffering did she not endure? what graces did she not draw down from Heaven to earth, by her unbroken prayer? And well may we believe she still intercedes for us, who take her place as penitents at the Feet of Jesus. Saint Mary Magdalene! may we through thee obtain the grace of perfect contrition, and faithful love.

COLLOQUY.

O Jesus, why is it that I do not love Thee more? My thoughts are self-inverted, instead of going forth to Thee in simple gratitude: they turn back upon myself. Fill my mind and heart with such a deep sense of what Thy love has done for me, when I have knelt at Thy Feet to seek Thy pardon, that they may be wholly engrossed with the grateful remembrance of it, and by my devoted attachment for Thee. May my life be spent in seeking Thee, O my dear Master; and may I, ere long, find Thee in the Paradise of God. Send a messenger to say: *The Master is come and calleth for thee.*

RESOLUTION.

In asking pardon of my sins, to think more of God's love than of my offences.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Thy faith had made thee safe: go in peace.

PRAYER.

Take, O Lord, and receive.

Saint James the Great.

The difficulty of understanding the Mystery of the Cross.

Can you drink the chalice that I shall drink? They say to him: We can. He saith to them: My chalice indeed you shall drink: but to sit on My right or left hand is not Mine to give you, but to them for whom it is prepared by My Father.—S. MATT. XX.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent Jesus conversing with much gentleness, with James and John and their mother: they made known to Him their desire of sitting near Him in His Kingdom.

II. PRELUDE.

O Lord Jesus, what need have we all of Thy grace to comprehend the mystery of the Cross. Deign to bestow it on us, that we may be ready for any sacrifice Thy love may point out for our acceptance.

I. POINT.

Nature fears toil, and mortification, and all that forms a cross.

Nothing shows more clearly how difficult it is to understand the mystery of the Cross, and how deeply ambition is rooted in the heart of man, than the worldly aspirations of the two Disciples, James and John. They were cherishing them, at the very time that their Divine Master had just definitely spoken to the Twelve, of the approaching hour of

His Passion and Crucifixion. Saint Luke observes that they comprehended nothing of what Jesus said on this subject; from which fact we gather that it is very difficult for the human understanding to enter into the mystery of holy suffering. The same Evangelist continues: *And they were afraid to ask Him concerning this word which was hid from them, so that they perceived it not.* They evidently did not understand, because they would not: they desired to follow their Master; but they shrank from the thought of the Passion and the Cross, fearing that they might have to share in them. So it is with us: we draw back when Jesus seems to be leading us on towards some mortification, some humiliation, some trial of our constancy. How we really fear, after all, to follow him: we should show much more readiness if He were to bid us sit down near Him. . . . But now let us look at Saint James a few weeks later, after having witnessed the Agony in the Garden, the Betrayal, the Death, the Resurrection, the Ascension of Jesus: after having received the pentecostal gifts of the Holy Ghost. He understands now about the way of the Cross and where it leads: to a Kingdom where all the Saints shall reign with His Divine Master eternally. We may be sure that had our Lord again asked: *Can you drink of My chalice?* he would with equal confidence, but with greater humility have replied: *I can.*

II. POINT.

Saint James partook indeed of the Chalice of our Lord.

He who had disputed as to whether he should be considered as one of the greatest—the most honourable amongst the Disciples of Jesus—after the Descent of the Holy Ghost, sought no longer any earthly distinction, *but rejoiced*

to be accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the sake of his Master. Now he was ambitious only of doing honour to His teaching, by faithfully enduring persecution, imprisonment, and the daily expectation of a cruel death. When able to drink of the chalice of suffering, it was not withheld; and when prepared—he received the baptism of blood, for at that time Herod stretched forth his hands to afflict some of the Church, and he killed James, the brother of John, with the sword. He was the first to give his life in their Master's cause, of those who had heard him say: He that will be first among you he shall be your servant. The Son of Man is not come to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His Life a redemption for many. Eleven years had passed away, and Saint James went from his prison-dungeon to occupy one of those twelve thrones, which God the Father had prepared for the chosen Apostles of His Beloved Son. If we glance at the Apostolic life, what a picture is presented to us! So much of it seems to lie under the deep shadow of the Cross—but is it not because the Light of light shines so gloriously beyond? Poverty, labour, watching, suspense, contradiction, persecution,—contempt and hatred of self, every kind of sacrifice in the interests of Jesus Christ and His Church—such is the life of an Apostle, such is the true copy of the Life of the Saviour. In some degree we can all be apostles, but not until we have banished worldly ambition, and *seek the things which are above, where Christ is sitting at the Right Hand of God.*

COLLOQUY.

O my God! I may well suspect that I understand so very imperfectly the mystery of the Cross, because of my little desire to do so. When Thou, O Jesus, dost speak to me of the necessity of suffering, I shrink from listening to

what Thou wouldst tell me. Nature prompts me to ask for a reprieve—for a little delay ; but let the words which Saint James heard Thee say, affect me so deeply, that I may banish all earthly aspirations, and strive to lead the life of a true apostle,—*rejoicing if accounted worthy to suffer reproach for Thy Name's Sake.*

RESOLUTION.

To put away every kind of earthly ambition, and to be prepared to meet with the Cross.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him.

PRAYER.

Soul of Christ.

Saint Anne.**The blessedness of the Mother of God.**

There shall come forth a Rod out of the Root of Jesse, and a Flower shall rise up out of His Root.—ISAIAH XI.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us transport ourselves to the house of Joachim, and there see Saint Anne instructing Mary in the Law of God.

II. PRELUDE.

O happy Mother of the Immaculate Virgin! may we learn from thee lessons in saintliness of life, whatever our vocation may be.

I. POINT.

The choice that God made of Saint Anne, to be the Mother of Mary.

Saint Anne was that Rod which sprang from the Root of Jesse. In His wisdom and goodness the Most High had pre-ordained that she, being of the house of David, the son of Jesse, should in a wonderful manner, become the Mother of her, whose Immaculate Conception would be the glory and joy of His Church. From this favoured Stem should spring the fairest, stateliest Flower—a Lily, most chaste. What a glorious privilege was it for Saint Anne, to be chosen as the one who should give birth to the Mother of God. What an unspeakable dignity, by which she acquired so honourable a title as that of the Mother of Mary! She was accounted worthy to train that peerless child who was destined to be the Bride of Heaven—the Spouse of the Holy Ghost. She taught Mary's infant lips to speak the Name of the Most High God—unconscious of the fact that it was from those same lips that the Son of God would first hear on earth His new Name of "Jesus". She set herself to fulfil her duties as a true mother, little knowing how sublime a recompense was awaiting her. We gather from this a lesson applicable to us all: to be faithful to the duties which pertain to the condition of life in which God has placed us. Like Saint Anne we do not know the consequence of our present fidelity,—results are in God's hands. Into the treasury of

God's Glory we cast our mite: an instruction given, a friendly counsel, an edifying conversation, a deed of charity, an act of reverence for God, our daily work well done; an unvarying example of modesty, of patience, of courtesy, of piety: the accompanying good intention, and act of confidence, attract the attention of Him, Who puts the highest value on all that is done from a sense of duty—loving duty to God and man; and He will repay us a hundred-fold. Let us observe Saint Anne discharging the simple duties of her wonderful vocation. Of the grandeur and the sublimity of it she was unaware, as she devoted herself to her child, *whose birth was to us the beginning of our salvation.*

II. POINT.

Saint Anne's fidelity to her vocation.

Although God the Father had adorned the heart and mind of Mary with unparalleled virtues, and caused her, from the moment of her Conception, to be worthy of far higher destinies, than were ever decreed to any other created being in Heaven or earth, still we may be sure that Saint Anne kept guard over her precious charge wonderingly, thankfully, yet carefully. Watching the developing of her mental capacities, the unfolding of her pure heart's affections, this true mother pointed out the Eternal God as the One Object worthy of Mary's love and contemplation. We can imagine how her own heart burned with divine charity, as she spoke with the little child, of her Heavenly Father, and of the beauty of His holy Law. Well does the Church to-day exclaim: *Let us all rejoice and celebrate this Festival in honour of Blessed Anne.* As she instructed Mary by her example and counsel, so may she, by these means also, lead

our hearts and minds to deeper love and higher contemplation of the perfections of the Godhead. Like Saint Anne we may one day find, that within some apparently humble duty have been enfolded results of momentous importance: this thought gives dignity to every action, simply done for the greater glory of God, and in imitation of the examples afforded us by His Saints. Saint Anne and Saint Joachim were called upon to make a great sacrifice, as all Saints are. Mary left them to consecrate herself to the service of God, within His Temple: but they faithfully fulfilled God's Will, and He was but hastening by means of this sacrifice, the bestowal of their incomparable reward.

COLLOQUY.

O Saint Anne! I think of thee to-day in the enjoyment of that dignity, to which God has raised thee as Mother of the Queen of Heaven. Thou didst correspond with such fidelity to the special graces of which He caused thee to be the object, that He held thee worthy to accomplish His most marvellous designs. To thy care was entrusted the Daughter of the Heavenly King—the Mother of God the Son—the Spouse of the Holy Ghost: how can I sufficiently honour one whom God has so honoured? how can I show, as I ought, my respect towards her whom Mary obeyed? It seems that to-day thou art bidding me accomplish my every duty carefully—faithfully—and simply—as a task set me by God Himself; remembering the importance and dignity which secretly accompanies even the smallest action thus performed. Help me, O Mother of Mary Immaculate, to dedicate my every employment to her, and her Beloved Son.

RESOLUTION.

To think more of the importance of the ordinary duties of every-day life.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Grace is poured abroad in thy lips : therefore, hath God blessed thee for ever.

PRAYER.

O God, Who by the Immaculate Conception.

Saint Ignatius of Loyola.

The charity of Saint Ignatius towards God and Man.

He that shall keep the commandments, and so teach men, shall be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven.—S. MATT. v.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent to ourselves Saint Ignatius in glory, enjoying the Vision of God, Whom he so much loved on earth: he is surrounded by many souls, whom he has guided towards Heaven.

II. PRELUDE.

O great Saint, whose love for God was so intense, and whose zeal for the salvation of souls knew no bounds,

obtain for us to-day an increase of love and zeal, that we may rightly fulfil the duties of our calling—doing all for the greater glory of God.

I. POINT.

Saint Ignatius' love for God.

This Saint, from the first moment of his conversion, gave himself to God absolutely: as soon as he knew Him, he loved Him ardently, and sacrificed himself—his all—to His service. In his familiar intercourse with God he often exclaimed: "Ah! Lord, what do I desire, what can I desire besides Thee?" The sight of even a flower sufficed to enrapture him: all things in nature led his thoughts directly to the Creator. We are told that when placing himself in the Presence of God before mental or vocal prayer, his heart was often so overwhelmed with the sense of what God was to him, that he shed tears of joy and love. And the constancy of his love was proved most forcibly by the signal services he rendered to our Lord and His Church, the heroic virtues he practised, and the calmness with which he suffered persecution. The greater glory of his Divine Master was the sole aim of all his actions; to gain souls for Him, the constant object of his wishes: and as fire cannot long remain concealed, so in Saint Ignatius, the fire of divine love which consumed his heart, was discoverable in all his words, visible in his countenance, and manifested by his every action. O Sacred Love! come and fill our hearts, and enkindle thy flames therein; that we, under thy holy influence, may speak and act, while all our thoughts and affections mount upwards to God.

II. POINT.

Saint Ignatius' love for his neighbour.

By the instituting of the Society of Jesus, its founder appeared above the world's horizon as a sun, whose genial rays of kindness should enlighten God's universe ;—or again he, and the great work with which he was indented, may be likened to a stately tree, whose summit should reach the clouds, and whose branches should extend to the utmost limits of the earth. His personal zeal was so vast that it may be said to have encircled the whole world, his charity so unbounded, that it embraced all, without distinction of age or condition ; to gain souls for God he was indefatigable in his labours, invincible in his combats against evil, insensible to injuries, unshaken by the fear of death. Nothing could stay him, when it was a question of saving a soul from ruin : he went through every stage of self-abnegation, to effect his purpose ; from privation to contempt, from contempt to bitter reproach : he endured all that the powers of darkness could essay for his discomfiture, nothing daunted, if he perceived there was a single soul to be rescued, or a single ray of glory for His Lord to be procured. What marvellous force there is in divine charity ! We admire its effects in the holy Founder of the Society of Jesus : in him the rapidity of its course, and the efficacy of its action, plainly shows that it took its rise in the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the fountain of pure love for souls. Oh ! that we might be watered ourselves with this heavenly stream more abundantly ; and that its sacred influence might render us more truly courageous and benevolent in seeking and saving souls.

COLLOQUY.

I thank Thee, O my God, for having given Saint Ignatius to Thy Church ; and I adore Thee, as I contemplate the wondrous powers with which Thou didst endow him. Grant that, following his example, I may, in the first place, be faithful to my vocation, with regard to my own advancement in sanctification, and then zealous and charitable in my endeavours to bring others into the safe path of salvation. May my principle of action like his also be, love for souls: may I more thoroughly adopt as my own, the constant watchword of this brave soldier of Jesus Christ: All for the greater glory of God.

RESOLUTION.

To give myself to God's service more entirely.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

All for the greater glory of God.

PRAYER.

Take, O Lord, and receive.

MEDITATIONS.

THE FIRST THURSDAYS IN EACH MONTH.

First Thursday in June.

Jesus desires to give Himself to us.

With desire I have desired to eat this Pasch with you before I suffer.—ST. LUKE XXII.

I. PRELUDE.

We hear Jesus pronouncing these words when seated at table with his Disciples ; just before their First Communion.

II. PRELUDE.

Make us to understand how greatly Thou desirest to unite Thyself to us ; and may we have no other longing, than that of uniting ourselves to Thee.

I. POINT.

Jesus ardently wishes to give Himself to us in the Blessed Eucharist.

With desire I have desired to eat this Pasch with you. Who is it that pronounces these words? What do they express? He Who pronounces them is our Loving Saviour, Who has come down from Heaven to repair our losses, to procure our happiness, to crown us with blessings. He gives utterance to this longing desire, at the moment when He is about to offer us the two strongest proofs of His infinite charity: the institution of the Sacrament of His Body and Blood; and the accomplishing of the Mystery of Calvary. These words express the profuseness of His love, which having filled His Sacred Heart, now overflows by reason of the intensity of that desire, wherewith He desired to eat this Pasch with us—His disciples—to whom these words are addressed. They were not intended only for the Apostles, but for all the Faithful, who should participate in the Eucharistic Feast until the end of time: and to each one of us who approach His Holy Table, He addresses those same words of loving assurance and alluring sweetness: *With desire have I desired to eat this Pasch with you.* O Lord, if Thou hadst not Thyself said this, who could believe that Thou art not only pleased to communicate Thyself to us, who are but poor and feeble creatures, but that Thy loving-kindness prompts Thee to testify an extreme desire to enter into our hearts. May we never ungratefully fail to recognise Thy love; but endeavour so to appreciate it, that our desire to be united to Thee, O Jesus, may be increased—intensified.

II. POINT.

Our practice of virtue must accord with our desire to receive Jesus in the Blessed Eucharist.

Our Divine Lord, having expressed the great desire He

has of uniting us with Himself, what have we on our part to say to Him? Has our longing for Holy Communion become at all commensurable with His? Does our desire in any way correspond to His? Is not the Eucharistic Food preferable to all the delights this life can afford? We may thus reply : *O God, my God, to Thee do I watch at break of day : for Thee my soul hath thirsted.* And we are sincere in thus speaking, and yet!—whence come these feelings of indifference?—this torpidity of which we are so often painfully conscious? How is it that we are frequently disinclined to make real efforts to be rightly prepared to participate in this Divine Banquet, at which Jesus presides? Why do we not fully enjoy the sweetness of His Presence there? It may be our Lord is proving our faith and our love, by depriving us of His sensible help and consolation : if so, we need not be disquieted. But perhaps He is wishing to show His disapproval of some point in our conduct : or can it be that our hearts are not yet purified from those affections, which are irreconcilable with the holy love He asks of us?—It is well then to examine ourselves, and see if we are resisting worldly allurements : if we are sacrificing generously all that might prove an obstacle to the operations of sacramental grace? Give us, O Lord, strength to put away every such hindrance ; above all, to vanquish self-love,—and all this, to prepare, in the midst of our hearts, a dwelling-place which shall be agreeable to Thee. Entering in, make us to hear Thy Voice, to experience the effects of Thy Presence :—so shall each loving soul joyfully exclaim :—*I to my Beloved, and His turning is towards me.*

COLLOQUY.

Deign to receive, O Jesus, my humble and grateful thanks

for the infinite love Thou dost manifest towards me, in desiring to unite me to Thyself in Holy Communion. I beseech Thee, to grant me pardon for having hitherto corresponded so slightly, with Thy merciful goodness in my regard. May Thy Loving Spirit inspire me with more fervent longings after Thee, *my God and my Saviour, in Whom is my salvation and my glory.*

RESOLUTION.

To combat all that may oppose the reign of the love of Jesus in my heart.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

In the Sanctuary have I come before Thee, to see Thy power and glory.

PRAYER.

Soul of Christ.

First Thursday in July.

The Holy Eucharist is the Source of light and consolation.

We shall be inebriated with the plenty of Thy house: and in Thy light shall we see light.—PSALM XXXV.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us contemplate Jesus Christ in the Cœnaculum, instituting the Divine Eucharist.

II. PRELUDE.

O Jesus, Fountain of all light, and consolation ; communicate, we beseech Thee, these Eucharistic gifts to us, as we unite ourselves to Thee in the Sacrament of Thy Love.

I. POINT.

The Holy Eucharist is the Source of Light.

Jesus Christ, during his mortal life, was the Light of the world. He instructed the ignorant, gave sight to the blind, enlightened the darkened understandings of His disciples ; showed to sinners the way of salvation. In the august Mystery of the Eucharist, none of the sublime characteristics which then distinguished our Lord are lost, but we now especially meditate on His power of enlightening and consoling. It has been aptly said, that in the Blessed Sacrament our Lord is essentially the Sun of Justice, the True Light which enlighteneth *every man that cometh into this world*. In presence of the Adorable Sacrament, some Saints have been permitted to comprehend, in a marvellous degree, by the aid of Its supernatural power of illuminating the soul, the greatness of God, the perfection of His attributes, the designs of His Providence in regard to the Church at large, or to individual members of it. And who can rightly speak of the wondrous beauty of those visions, wherein it has been given to some, to penetrate the Eucharistic Veils, and behold Jesus Christ, encompassed by the Angels of the Blessed Sacrament ! There have been undoubtedly such extraordinary favours, such miraculous facts ; and they presuppose lesser manifestations of divine light to less privileged souls. Yes ! it is before the Tabernacle that sinners, having

a good will, see more clearly the hatefulness of sin, and become more thoroughly converted : while the just discover more perfectly the charms of virtue, and become yet more holy. At the foot of the Altar the true value of the soul is realised with increased distinctness ; the illusions of the world fade away ; the obscurity caused by the presence of evil passions, is dispelled—as they have been ; the clouds of difficulty and of sorrow which have surrounded the past, are scattered before the bright rays which stream in upon our hearts and minds, from the Light of light That dwelleth there.

II. POINT.

The grace of consolation, of which the Holy Eucharist is the Source.

Jesus Christ in the Eucharist is, to those who adore Him therein in spirit and in truth, a Friend, a Comforter. After having proved that He has loved us more than his own Life, after *having borne our infirmities and carried our sorrows*, it would seem impossible for Him to be in the midst of us, without compassionating our misery and weakness ; and offering relief to those who suffer grief. A pious soul therefore turns rather towards the Tabernacle for consolation, than towards creatures ; however sympathising these may be, they cannot lift off the weight of trial as Jesus can : our confidence in Him cannot be deceived ; by Him our tears are never disdained. Has it become natural to us to turn at once towards Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, when in need of help ? of solace ? There is the panacea for every ill—for every wound : we are convinced of this, and yet we avail ourselves of it, perhaps only sometimes. Happy are we, if we can look back to many blessed hours of spiritual

communion with our Lord in His Sanctuary, when we have spoken to Him as *a man is wont to speak to his friend*. It behoves us often to pray, that as we have gone to Him there during our life, to seek for consolation and for strength, so in our death-hour He may deign to visit us, and fortify us for our last journey—that journey to another Country—so solitary, so full of danger, unless Jesus accompany us. How frequently has the Holy Viaticum revived faith, and hope, and love in the dying; causing confidence to overcome despair, impatience to be succeeded by resignation, and murmuring to give place to words of thankfulness and praise. As in the midst of this transitory life, we are in death, so in the midst of death we find Him, Who is the unending Life, graciously communicating Himself to us—just when the fulfilment of His promise is about to be realised: *I am the Living Bread which came down from Heaven: he that eateth this Bread shall live for ever.*

COLLOQUY.

O Jesus, I do not deserve to be visited and consoled by Thee, because I have so often forgotten Thy Sacramental Presence—so often grieved Thee by my unfaithfulness to Thy Sacramental grace. Yet I may truly say: *Thou art my light and my salvation; and one thing I ask of Thee, that I may dwell in the House of the Lord all the days of my life: that I may see the delight of the Lord, and visit His Temple.* Feed me with the Bread of Angels, O most Loving Jesus, that I may be one with Thee; and in my last hour come and be my Safeguard, as I pass through the midst of the shadow of death, to the realities of the life of the world to come.

RESOLUTION.

Often to think of Jesus dwelling in the holy Tabernacles of His Church, and of my happiness in being able to visit Him there.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

In Thy light shall we see light.

PRAYER.

Soul of Christ.

MEDITATIONS.

THE FIRST FRIDAYS IN EACH MONTH.

First Friday in June.

The Heart of Jesus is that of a most faithful Friend.

Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends: I have called you friends.—
S. JOHN XV.

I. PRELUDE.

We may withdraw in spirit, into the Coenaculum with Jesus and His Apostles, and hear Him say to us, as well as to them: *I will not now call you servants, but friends.*

II. PRELUDE.

Give us grace, O Lord Jesus, to become worthy of being called Thy friends; and to make reparation for those who range themselves amongst Thine enemies, and still despise the love of Thy Sacred Heart.

I. POINT.

Jesus is willing to be the True Friend of all men, but the greater number refuse to accept His Friendship.

I will not now call you servants: but I have called you friends. It is God Who pronounces these words, and it is to us that He addresses them. This single thought ought to be sufficient to melt our hearts with gratitude. Jesus desires to be our Friend; that we seek to be admitted into His special confidence, and that we may speak with Him familiarly of all that concerns and interests us. He knows our unworthiness, but this proves no obstacle: He forgets, as it were, His majesty and greatness, and remembers only the unchangeable purposes of His love. We are in the company of His disciples—amongst His chosen friends—and Jesus desires to retain us as such. Let us remain then apart from the world, safe in the Upper-Room of retirement and nearness to our Blessed Lord. If we are His true friends, we shall enter into the sorrows of His Sacred Heart, as we recollect that He has many enemies. *Whosoever will be the friend of the world, becometh the enemy of God,* and, alas! the friends of the world are far more numerous than the friends of Jesus. What has He ever done to excite enmity? *Have they not hated Him without a cause?* How is it possible that any can deliberately choose to take part against Him—their Benefactor? And yet this fact remains—our Dear Lord has, comparatively speaking, very few friends. How much then these few have to do! to maintain His honour—to make reparation for the injuries done to the love of His Sacred Heart—to let their endeavours to promote His glory, be in proportion to the endeavours of the friends of the world to deprive Him of it. Do we, as

the friends of Jesus, rightly consider our privileges?—our advantages, both present and future?—and then our responsibilities?

II. POINT.

The faithful friends of Jesus console His Divine Heart.

The goodness of Jesus, and the title of Friend, with which He has deigned to honour us, both impose equally on us the sacred obligation of consoling His Heart, for the culpable insensibility of those who will neither love Him, nor even know Him. He calls us into His Presence, He holds frequent intercourse with us, He reveals to us the secrets of His love, and bestows on us numberless favours, which are actually refused by those who care not for His Friendship. He asks that we should compassionate His sorrows, and thanks us if we practically shew our appreciation of His unbounded goodness. The predominant desire of the Sacred Heart is, that all may be saved—that each enemy may be converted into a friend; and it is for those who already possess His Friendship to bring about the realisation of that desire. Filled with holy zeal for the interests of Jesus, we should leave nothing undone to win for Him the love He so perseveringly solicits; to the outrages offered to Him, His Heart is less sensible, than to the certainty of the eternal loss of many who have been called. *He that loveth not, knoweth not God*: this explains what form our zeal should take—lays down a plan which our devotedness should work out. It is a truer knowledge of God that is wanted, a clearer perception of His charity. To increase this knowledge, to awaken souls to a sense of His infinite love, is the best consolation we can offer to the Sacred Heart.

COLLOQUY.

O my Jesus, Thou hast deigned to call me Thy Friend, notwithstanding my great unworthiness of this high privilege. *Thou hast loved me* : having thus secured my love, do Thou make it ever more responsive to Thine own. May all that still remains in my heart of tepidity, or ingratitude, disappear; as I become more engrossed in the interests of Thy Sacred Heart. Give me deeper sentiments of generosity, and devotedness : may I not only seek to repair the wrongs committed against It, but by my zeal in Its behalf, gain many to share in Thy Friendship.

RESOLUTION.

. To make acts of love, in the intention of consoling the Divine Heart of Jesus.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

But I have called you My friend.

PRAYER.

O Jesus, living in Mary.

First Friday in July.

The Heart of Jesus is that of a Brother.

Go to My Brethren, and say to them : I ascend to My Father and to your Father.—S. JOHN XX.

I. PRELUDE.

We represent to ourselves the Son of God, as, in speaking to Mary Magdalene, He calls the Disciples His Brothers.

II. PRELUDE.

O Good Jesus, grant that in meditating upon the titles of affection Thou dost bestow on Thy Disciples, we may learn how to render ourselves more worthy of them.

I. POINT.

Jesus loves us as a Brother.

Go and say to My Brethren : I ascend to My Father and to your Father. What motives of love and gratitude are presented to us in these words ! Jesus, the Only Son of the Eternal Father, loved us so much, that He became one of us. He entered the human family as the Elder Brother, a new relationship was formed between it and God: *for we are all the children of God, by faith in Christ Jesus.* When the Son of Mary is asked by His Disciples that he would teach them how to pray, His first thought is expressed, by the manner in which He addresses God. The Fatherhood of God is the first idea he conveys to their minds. You and I—He seems to say—we are His Children ; we will approach Him, and to attract His attention simply say : Our Father. He, Who thus prays with us each time we invoke God, *having been appointed Heir of all things*, desires that we share His inheritance with Him, and participate in the happiness, of being the *sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty.* But to ensure to all men the right of inheritance, let us think of what our Elder Brother has had to endure, from those even

whom He desires to enrich and to ennoble ! To what a degree has the Loving Heart of Jesus suffered on our account ! As we consider this, can we remain insensible to the unequalled claims He has upon our gratitude and devotion ? Is a life-time too long to partake in His toil, His humiliations, His sufferings, so that we may be made *worthy to be partakers hereafter of the lot of the Saints in light, whom God the Father hath translated into the Kingdom of the Son of His Love ?*

II. POINT.

The brotherly love manifested by the Heart of the Son of God, is repaid often by ingratitude.

If the illimitable love of Jesus should inspire us with pure joy—if the many titles of affection under which He makes known to us His desire to convey to our minds some idea of what that love is, should awaken in us deep gratitude—ought not our hearts, at the same time, to feel much sorrow, and to be inflamed with zeal, at the sight of the coldness and indifference of the greater portion of mankind towards the Sacred Heart. All are adopted into the family of God in Holy Baptism ; to all are offered treasures of grace, purchased at the price of the Precious Blood ; the kingdom of Heaven is promised to each member of this family, who shall not have degenerated from the dignity of the position to which he has been raised. And yet we see on all sides these promises disdained, these offers rejected ! Transient glory is preferred to the eternal honour of having Jesus for a Brother : to attain riches which cannot be carried into another world, all claims to the celestial inheritance are renounced : this life offers a few gratifications, ease—comfort—the pleasures of the senses—and these are grasped ; while

the delights of the endless life are thrown away. And the First-Begotten of the Eternal Father is looking upon all this; and it grieves Him that so many are selling their heavenly birthright for the passing vanities of earth. They are our brethren so long as Jesus has not disowned them; and the Sacred Heart pleads with us, that we will seek to show them the value of that, of which they are doing their utmost to dispossess themselves. Are we ourselves faithful brethren of Jesus? Can we look up to His Father and ours, with the loving confidence of true children? Happy is the thought that *He hath chosen the poor in this world, rich in faith, to be heirs of the Kingdom which He has promised to them that love Him.*

COLLOQUY.

Thanks be to Thee, O God, that Thou hast called me to be an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven. But the path that leads thither is that of suffering; I know I cannot reach it by any easier way than the way of the Cross, along which Thou, my Elder Brother, dost guide me by Thy example. May I console Thy Heart, by gaining others to accept the conditions laid down by our Father. A short life of trial—an eternity of bliss: a few years of toil and weariness—everlasting rest: a little longer privation, borne in the spirit of poverty—untold riches which perish not. And may I myself, value more and more the dignity of my vocation *as an heir of God, and joint-heir with Christ.*

RESOLUTION.

To pray with Jesus in saying: Our Father.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

My Father and your Father—My God and your God.

PRAYER.

Our Father, and Hail Mary.

MEDITATIONS.

SATURDAYS.

Second Saturday after Easter.

Mary protects her children against temptation.

And the Lord God said to the serpent: She shall crush thy head. . . . And the dragon was angry with the woman.—GENESIS III. ; APOC. XII.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent Mary as charged by God to crush the head of the infernal serpent.

II. PRELUDE.

O Mary, most powerful, we pray thee to help us to triumph against the machinations of the devil and his angels.

I. POINT.

Mary protects us from the assaults of the devil.

The Evangelist, when recounting the temptations with which the devil assailed our Lord, thus finishes this episode in His history : *Then the devil left Him.* The same may be said each time the devil may have sought to surprise into a defeat a true soldier of Jesus Christ : he leaves him. And why ? because the evil one dreads the outcome of an open hand-to-hand combat, with one that fights for the honour of Him Who may justly be called the Divine Example of all heroic virtue, knowing it will end for him in a humiliating overthrow. The devil is a great coward. After a few attempts to wound a saintly adversary, he quits the field, at least for a time : the angels, of whom Mary is the Queen, are seen approaching ; and Lucifer forgets not their onslaught in her cause, when he refused to accept the truth, that *she should bring forth the King, Who reigns over Heaven and earth for evermore.* If we trace out the thought that Mary was the woman chosen by God, from all eternity, to crush the head of the serpent, what doubt can be left in our minds as to her still being the protector of all who call her—Mother ; a defence against the attacks of her foe and ours. God has, as it were, laid this charge of succouring us upon her. And besides exerting her protecting influence directly in our behalf, she can also obtain for us those solid virtues which blunt the edge of Satan's weapons. She knows that the more closely we resemble our Incarnate Lord the more the devil hates us, and the more subtly he plans his attacks. He observes our growing likeness to Jesus, and his enmity increases ; but our holy Mother is observing it also, and her loving care for us, and power with God, are called forth by our identifying ourselves in the hour of temptation with her Divine Son. We ought indeed to be continually warring with the powers of evil, and that without alarm ; for in the "Tower of David" we find an armoury, from which

we can take at any moment, the weapon most suited to our need.

II. POINT.

Mary assists, by means of the Angels, those especially who are consecrated to God.

The Virgin Queen of the Angels deposes them to guard from evil, those especially who would lead an angelic life, in accordance with their consecration-vow of chastity.—If we have been called to this state of life, it is the Blessed Virgin who has obtained this privilege for us ; and to enable us to preserve it inviolate, she directs the ministering spirits of good to succour us when exposed to the spiteful assaults of him who has wicked legions at his bidding, seeking to wound and destroy our souls. God deigns to permit His Angels to ward off dangers, to pray for us, to withdraw us from the power of Satan, to incline us to good, to bring us holy inspirations, to console us in time of tribulation ; but let us remember that He loves to give into the hands of Mary, power to dispense His favours, and to send His gifts to such as invoke her assistance. How quickly should her name rise to our lips, when we are in need of help ; in all our temptations how confidently should we have recourse to her, who has such forces at her command ! The celestial battalions are invincible : it is our own fault if we are overcome through want of humility, without which we delude ourselves into the idea that we need not be dependent on the good offices of the Angels and Saints. Let us not rush single-handed into the fight, but remember that there is safety in a multitude ; that we have but to ask, and we shall find there are more for us, than those that are against us.

COLLOQUY.

O Mary! well art thou styled the "Terror of Hell," and likened to an "army set in battle-array". When thy Divine Son was tempted by the devil, He—as Man—claimed the promise that the Angels of God should be sent to the assistance of those who needed their care. Now that thou art crowned their Queen, obtain for me from God, that I may be accounted worthy to be succoured by them; and set them as a guard around me when I am in danger of falling into the hands of the angels of the arch-enemy. I know that thou wilt not betray the confidence I place in thee, O Blessed Virgin; and that I may always rely on thy personally interesting thyself on my behalf, whenever I invoke thy aid.

RESOLUTION.

To have recourse to Mary, with confidence and humility, in times of temptation.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Help of Christians! pray for me.

PRAYER.

We fly to thy patronage.

Third Saturday after Easter.

Mary fulfilled the designs of God most perfectly.

He hath regarded the humility of His handmaid: for behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

—S. LUKE I.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent to ourselves the most holy Virgin, when on earth: so beautiful in God's sight on account of her purity and fidelity.

II. PRELUDE.

O Holy Mary, purest of Virgins! may we, by thy instrumentality, participate in the profound humility and saintly purity that caused God the Father to choose thee to be the Mother of His Son.

I. POINT.

Mary's love for holy purity.

No created being could ever love the angelic virtue as did Mary, but all may share in her esteem for it. When the Angel Gabriel saluted her as *blessed among women*, and announced to her that *she had found grace with God and should bring forth a Son*, that *He should be Great—the Son of the Most High*—she appeared insensible, for the moment, to the glory attached to the Divine Maternity, and her first thought may thus be read: It is indeed much to be selected to be the Mother of the Messiah, but before all honour, this

highest honour even, I must prefer that perpetual virginity to which I am vowed. In her humility she needs the Angel's further explanation, before she comprehends that it is on account of her perfect practice of the angelic virtue, that she is to fulfil in her person the prophecy: *Behold a Virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and His Name shall be called Emmanuel.* When she heard the words: *The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee: And therefore also the Holy Which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God,* Mary understood the mystery of His Conception, and knew the truth of the declaration: that she was *blessed among women.* With what rapture must she have adored her God! what inconceivable delight must she have found in the contemplation of Him, Who was the Immaculate Offspring of her Virginity! Oh, wondrous alliance between the creature and the Creator! consummated in a superhuman manner—affecting the welfare of mankind—intensifying the glory of God. And why at Nazareth? Because the Creator delighted to honour her whose little home was there, so perfectly did she correspond to His graces of predilection.

II. POINT.

Mary's life-long fidelity.

At Easter-tide it is well to take a retrospective glance over the past thirty-three years of Mary's life, as we see it side-by-side with that of Him to Whom she gave birth. How closely interwoven had those two lives been! Jesus, in His Incarnation, throughout the course of His Childhood, Boyhood, and Manhood; during His public Ministry, in the hour of His Passion, on the road to Calvary, as He hung

on the Cross, as He lay in the Sepulchre, as He rose from the Grave—All-glorious and Immortal—blended her love, her zeal for souls, her sufferings, her courage, her resignation, her joys, with His. Most faithful Virgin! most admirable Mother! the purest and fairest of all created beings! the companion of the God-Man during His Life on earth! How true Mary was to her vocation! How perfectly she accomplished the Divine Will! It is a wholesome practice, relatively to draw a comparison between our life and hers: and the contrast we find, should have the effect of arousing our energy to fresh exertions, in order to lessen it; to attain a closer resemblance to the Virgin most faithful. Her faith sanctified her every thought, desire, and action—God and God only, was her one intention: this gave a supernatural force and impulse to all her powers, and makes her example of a holy life to appear before our eyes, like a bright unbroken track of light, reaching from Nazareth to the Heavenly Jerusalem. It guides us under every circumstance, straight forward to the Eternal Home of Jesus and His Mother.

COLLOQUY.

My Mother, as I contemplate thy virtues, by the un failing practice of which thou didst win for thyself the title of “Virgin most faithful,” I feel drawn to prove my devotion to thee more worthily. I know I can best do this by loving and obeying God, as thou didst. Oh! help me to understand His Will in my regard. As thy whole life was the extension of that simple profession of perfect obedience: *Behold the Handmaid of the Lord, be it done unto me according to thy word*, so may my life be one continued act of submission, to the dispensations of Divine Providence.

RESOLUTION.

To endeavour to imitate the faithfulness of the Virgin-Mother.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Blessed art thou amongst women.

PRAYER.

We fly to thy patronage.

Fourth Saturday after Easter.

**The advantages of the pious practice of keeping the
Month of Mary.**

All generations shall call me blessed.—S. LUKE I.

I. PRELUDE.

We represent to ourselves Mary, venerated by the Angels and Saints in Heaven, and by the just on earth.

II. PRELUDE.

To thee, O Mary, do we dedicate this Month, and desire in a special manner to honour thee during its course. Accept the daily offering we bring to thy feet, and give us thy blessing.

I. POINT.

The practice of keeping the Month of Mary, excites in our souls a truer devotion to our dear Mother.

To Holy Church it appertains to make known to Her children the prerogatives of Her august Queen ; to unfold by Her teaching, higher motives of love and veneration towards her ; to promote her glory ; to proclaim her virginity, her sanctity, her infinite dignity. To speak aright the praises due to Mary is beyond the limited power of human language ; but whilst waiting for the time when we shall hear how the Angels extol their Sovereign, and learn their seraphic strains, let us enter into the spirit of the Church on earth, at this particular season ; and honour our Mother in every way that child-like love, and grateful affection may suggest. It has been well said : that after the knowledge of our Lord Jesus, there can be nothing more useful and delightful than to study to increase in the knowledge of her, whom God has honoured far beyond any other created being. Yes ! we should not rest content with a mere sentimental, or exterior devotion to Mary, but make use of this opportunity to increase the depth and reality of our love for her. As we consider more thoroughly her virtues, we must necessarily discover more clearly our own duties and obligations, and feel our dependence on her succour. If this month be thus employed, its effects will not be transient, but extend not only through the month of May, but throughout the whole course of our lives.

II. POINT.

By the special devotions of May, we ensure the maternal protection of Mary

Is it not certain that we shall merit more abundant graces, if we, each year, avail ourselves of this fixed period, which is devoted to the accomplishing of definite practices of piety in honour of her, of whom Jesus said to us: *Behold your Mother?* She is our nearest spiritual relation. We shall surely enjoy the blessing of her maternal care, we shall draw down upon our heads her benediction, if we pay this annual tribute of filial affection. It has been remarked, that she is in the habit of repaying with generosity the very smallest services; she accepts each little token of love with motherly tenderness, and hastens to give a much better one in return. Let us endeavour to make our three successive novenas in a true spirit of piety, and holy confidence in "the Mother of our King, and the Mother of us, who are still exiles" (as Saint Bonaventura expresses it)—the Mother of God and the Mother of man. It is for us, especially at this time, to fulfil her own inspired prophecy: *All generations shall call me blessed*: blessed, and the source of blessings to every generation, let us proclaim the Blessed Virgin Mary to be, with all the enthusiasm of heartfelt devotion.

COLLOQUY.

I entirely devote myself to thy service, O Mary, during this Month. The barrenness of winter having departed, Nature reminds me of the new life and joy which dawned upon the world in thee and by thee. Awaken a spring-time of fresh love within me for thyself; fostered by thy care, may affection for thee grow up and put forth flowers of virtue, pleasing in thine eyes, and pleasing therefore in the sight of thy Divine Son. I desire to place at thy feet daily offerings of devotion; and do thou bless me, and watch over me with all the solicitude of thy most loving heart.

RESOLUTION.

Not to allow this month to pass away without having obtained from Mary many favours.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Behold Mary, think of Mary, invoke Mary.

PRAYER.

O God, Who by the Immaculate Conception.

Saturday during the Octave of the Ascension.

The Sorrow and the Joy of Mary with regard to the Mystery of the Ascension.

While they looked on, JESUS was raised up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight: Then they—the Apostles, the holy women, and Mary the Mother of JESUS and His brethren—returned to Jerusalem.—ACTS I.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us contemplate Mary in the Mystery of the Ascension,—entering into her feelings both of sorrow and of joy, and she sees her Divine Son going up into Heaven.

II. PRELUDE.

O Mary, as we share in thy sorrow at being separated from thy Son, and thy joy at witnessing His triumphant Ascension, may we follow thy example of obedience and patience when thou wast left still on earth.

I. POINT.

The sorrow of Mary in the Mystery of the Ascension.

If we analyse our own feelings on the Feast of the Ascension, we shall perhaps better imagine what Mary's must have been, as she found herself still left in this world, while her Beloved had passed away, far out of sight. There is present in our hearts to-day, sorrow for ourselves, that we are still exiles; and joy for Him, that He has reached His Home. We seem to gain, at least, a faint idea of the holy Mother's longing to ascend to Heaven with her Son: and of what her desire must have been to accompany Him, as He made His triumphant entry into the Realms of Glory. Could she think of Him, so full of grace and truth, so perfect in His divine beauty, and not be afflicted to find Him gone, and that the days of her pilgrimage are to be prolonged? Let us accompany her as she re-enters the Cœnaculum, and see how unselfish and obedient she is, in the midst of all the fresh grief of her bereavement. She hastens to carry out the wishes of Jesus—to remain in Jerusalem—and to act the part of a true Mother to those who had also their own trial, and pain of parting, to bear. If we sigh on account of our prolonged separation from our Ascended Lord, let us call to mind Mary's quiet, yet active sympathy with those who were sharers in her sorrow:

they had lost their Master—she had lost her Son. Let us thank her for her example of patient resignation to the Will of God. She had her allotted work to do for the Church during her time of waiting—and so have we: are we so faithfully doing it, that we may one day be able to repeat as she could, the words of our Divine Lord: *I have finished the work, O Father, that Thou gavest me to do: And now I come to Thee?*

II. POINT.

The joy of Mary in the Mystery of the Ascension.

Although sorrow undoubtedly found its place in the heart of the divine Mother when the clouds *received Jesus out of her sight*, yet her joy in witnessing Him ascend to His Heavenly Father was deep and real. She rejoiced that in the Person of her Own Son, Heaven was on this day reopened to the race of Adam, whose sin of disobedience had closed it, four thousand years before. She saw Him, Who had descended from Heaven to put on the garb of Humanity in the midst of privation and humiliation, now ascend gloriously to the Right Hand of God, and by His presence there, as her Son, to prove man's claim to a celestial inheritance. What a joy also for His Mother to know, that Jesus went back to Heaven as Victor over Death and Hell, having put His enemies under His Feet. It was doubtless granted her to hear the echo of that hymn of triumph then sung by the Angels, and which she had learned in the Temple, long ere she knew that to her would belong the happy privilege of the divine maternity: *Be ye lifted up, O eternal Gates, and the King of Glory shall enter in: Who is this King of Glory? The Lord Who is Strong and*

Mighty: the Lord Mighty in battle. . . . Who is this King of Glory? And down deep in Mary's heart there is the Mother's answer, finding expression in an undefinable increase of holy joy: My own Son. Truly none can fully comprehend the greatness of her joy, for she knew, better than any other creature could ever know, how sublime, how marvellous was the mystery of the Ascension; but the contemplation of the perceivable sentiments of Mary's heart—so controlled, so sanctified—during the accomplishment of this great and glorious Mystery will render our devotion more ardent, more real.

COLLOQUY.

Mary, Mother of our Ascended Lord, may I learn from thee how to rejoice in God, while considering the increase of His glory on the day of the royal triumph of thy Son. I have indeed a sense of sorrow in my heart, because the duration of my exile is yet prolonged; but I will seek to employ it, in accordance with thy example, in promoting the interests of the Church, in ministering to the wants of others, and in keeping alive within me that true spiritual joy, which springs from obedience and resignation to God's holy Will. May I henceforth know no other sorrows nor joys, but those in which I may be sure thou wilt sympathise.

RESOLUTION.

To rejoice with Mary at the thought of the glory of the God-Man, in the Mystery of the Ascension.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

*My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced
in God, my Saviour.*

PRAYER.

We fly to thy patronage.

Saturday after the Octave of the Ascension.

**Mary, together with the Apostles and Disciples, prepares
for the Mystery of Pentecost.**

*The Apostles were persevering with one mind in prayer,
with the women, and Mary the Mother of JESUS, and with His
brethren.*—ACTS I.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent to ourselves the most holy Virgin, in the midst of the Apostles and the other disciples, absorbed in prayer.

II. PRELUDE.

Queen of the Infant Church, by whose presence and example the Apostle and disciples were assisted in their preparation for the coming of the Holy Ghost, obtain for us the grace also to receive Him worthily.

I. POINT.

Mary's prayers obtained great grace for those who prayed together with her.

If it be so, that *the prayer of the humble pierceth the heavens*, and never fails to be heard and answered, how efficacious must have been the prayer of the lowly Handmaid of the Lord, when beseeching Him to hasten the Advent of the Paraclete. It had been at the moment when she gave proof of her humility, in consenting to the Mystery of the Incarnation, that the Holy Ghost had overshadowed her, and *the Word was made Flesh* in the little house at Nazareth; and now we see the Mother of Jesus humbly praying in the Cœnaculum—making a Novena with the Disciples—and at the end of it, the Holy Ghost descends, not this time on her alone, but on all those assembled, and praying together with her. She has been praying for the Infant Church, for that family gathered around her; for which like a true Mother, she will do her utmost, to procure all spiritual and temporal benefits. And how necessary to her was the outpouring of the Holy Spirit of God, since on her so many and important duties now devolved. His gifts of grace, His illuminating Presence in her soul being marvellously increased on the Day of Pentecost, she was fitted to be the oracle of the Faithful; her words flowed from the treasury of wisdom—being dictated by her Celestial Spouse. *He that is Mighty did great things in her: having Himself created her in the Holy Ghost.* God willed now, in accordance with His all-wise purposes, *to pour her out among all His works*; that all the nations of the earth might know and extol the Mother of Jesus, and that her praise might henceforth resound throughout the Catholic Church.

II. POINT.

Mary persevered in prayer.

Let us kneel by the side of Mary, and join her in her preparation for the event of to-morrow. In doing so, we shall find it easier to be attentive and recollected ; and more persevering in our entreaty that the Spirit of God may be poured forth on us. In that Upper-room, Mary's supplications enhanced the value of all those which were offered to God, in union with them. She felt the importance of those days of prayer, she already knew what it was to be *endued with power from on high*. Unconsciously to herself, her earnestness, and unwearied energy in praying, affected the Disciples ; and upheld them in their resolve to *wait for the Promise of the Father*—to be obedient to the command of their absent Master. They had heard Him say that the *Good Spirit would be given to them that ask the Heavenly Father for It* ; and now they see Mary, who knew so well the mind of her Son, leading them on to make this request with gentle violence ; by means of knocking at Heaven's portal, that it might be opened for the Descent of the Third Person of the Holy Trinity. Let us unite our supplications to those which went up to God, on that Vigil of the Feast of Pentecost when the members of the Church *were all together in one place*.

COLLOQUY.

O Mary, my Mother, thou didst assist by thy example of fervent prayerfulness, the Disciples of thy Son during their ten days of preparation for the Coming of the Holy Ghost. Assist me to-day to realise the importance of this Mystery,

so that I may be better prepared to receive the Spirit of love and of consolation. I unite my prayers to thine; thus may they merit to be accepted, and to win for me His seven-fold Gifts of grace.

RESOLUTION.

Throughout the day to ask the Holy Spirit, by the merits of Mary's intercession, to descend into my heart.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

All persevered in prayer, with Mary the Mother of Jesus.

PRAYER.

O Jesus, living in Mary.

Saturday in the Octave of Pentecost.

**The relation in which Mary stands with regard to the
Three Persons of the Holy Trinity.**

The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee: And therefore also the Holy Which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God.—S. LUKE I.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us contemplate Mary, as the Temple in which the August Trinity delighteth to dwell.

II. PRELUDE.

O Mary! whom the Three Persons of the Most Holy Trinity honoured when on earth, above all other creatures, and in a manner far beyond all human comprehension, may we increase in love and veneration for thee, each day of our lives.

I. POINT.

Mary in relation to the Eternal Father.

Our Lady has been called the masterpiece of God's creative skill; and the shrine wherein the Deity dwelleth. These names have been bestowed on her chiefly on account of the intimate and indissoluble relation to Each Person of the Holy Trinity, for which she was prepared by God's own hand, and fitted by His grace and love. With the Eternal Father she shares the prerogative of having a Son in the Person of Jesus Christ. To Him, in consequence of His divine generation being from Eternity—before all worlds—the Father declared: *Thou art My Son; to-day have I begotten Thee*. And because of the Incarnation, the Eternal Son, *Who is in the Bosom of the Father*, is also called the Son of Mary. It was this peerless Virgin who was elected to promote in an infinite degree the glory of the Heavenly Father, when *the Son, equal to the Father, according to His Godhead*, took upon Him the form of Man, and as such

called the Father: *His Lord and His God*. The Son began, even in His holy Mother's womb, to offer a worthy and acceptable sacrifice, to render to His Father honour and glory. O Mary, full of grace, under thine auspices, and thy protection, may we all find favour in the sight of Heaven; and by means of thy powerful intercession, may *the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the charity of God, and the communication of the Holy Ghost be with us all.* Amen.

II. POINT.

Mary in relation to the Divine Son, and the Holy Ghost.

The holy Virgin contracted with the Eternal Word, that intimate relationship which nature forms between a mother and a son. She brought forth the God-Man, and He became subject to her, as a true and loving Son must, by the law of God as well as the law of nature, be to a true and loving Mother. This relationship, once established, could never be annulled. Jesus, on His eternal Throne, is still Mary's Son; and listens to her as she expresses her desires on our behalf. And as our Mediatrix she speaks with Him, the Mediator—as the Queen-Mother she pleads for us with our Prince and Saviour.— . . . From her Spouse, the Holy Ghost, Mary received an infinity of grace. In the moment of her Conception He had consecrated her as His own possession. By His operation the Mystery of the Incarnation was accomplished: our Lady became a mother, without losing the precious treasure of virginity; and according to Saint Bonaventura, in a threefold manner, her loveliness was enhanced: as regarded her own self—in her relations with the rest of mankind—and with God, her Creator. In her He delighted to dwell: and it pleased

Him to make her the channel through whom we, having received the Gift of His Dear Son, may expect to receive every other grace which we desire, and beg her to obtain for us. May the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity regard with satisfaction our endeavours to do honour to her, whom They have honoured far, far above every other creature !

COLLOQUY.

O Blessed Virgin Mary, what grace, what glory God has bestowed on thee ! Would that I could proclaim thy greatness as the beloved Daughter of the Father, the Virgin-Mother of the Son, and the pure Spouse of the Holy Ghost. Ask for me that I may better comprehend the Mystery of God's love for thee ; so that I may be constantly striving to please Him, by showing thee greater attention and devotion ; and by evincing my appreciation of His goodness, in permitting me to avail myself of thy continual prayer before His Throne.

RESOLUTION.

To honour Mary more.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Fair Shrine ! where the Trinity loveth to dwell.

PRAYER.

We fly to Thy patronage.

Saturday in the Octave of Corpus Christi.

Mary gives the example of frequent Communion.

If any man eat of this Bread, he shall live for ever.—

S. JOHN VI.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent to ourselves the Blessed Virgin receiving Holy Communion, with intense fervour and loving devotion.

II. PRELUDE.

O Mary, who hadst the happiness of receiving so often thy Adorable Son in the Sacrament of His Love, grant that we may participate in the sentiments of thy heart, each time we approach the Holy Table.

I. POINT.

Mary communicated frequently.

In the primitive Church, the fervour of Christians being so great, it was prescribed that the Faithful should communicate daily, and as we are told: *they were persevering in the doctrine of the Apostles, and in the communication of the breaking of bread and in prayers.* They well understood that Holy Communion was the means by which the whole body of Christians should *be compacted and fitly joined together*, in and with Jesus Christ. As Saint Cyril remarks: "it was well comprehended that as wax mixes itself with liquid wax, and as fire penetrates the already heated iron, so

in the Holy Eucharist we are incorporated into Jesus Christ—made one with Him”. We may, therefore, justly conclude that the Blessed Virgin, by communicating every day, carried out the express wish of her Son. And for her own part, she would be drawn to do this, on account of her love for Him; and her desire to unite herself daily more perfectly to Him. And further, she acted thus in order to enjoy the marvellous effects of this August Sacrament, the augmentation of grace and of spiritual joy which this Divine Nourishment imparts. Let us learn then never to deprive ourselves of Holy Communion without grave reasons, but rather seek to be permitted to receive It every day.

II. POINT.

Mary's preparation for Communion was perfectly made.

Who could be so well disposed, in heart and mind, to receive the Body and Blood of Jesus, as our Lady? Who could equal her in fervour? What a life of preparation she led! a life of uninterrupted prayer and thanksgiving; as our lives should also be, if we would receive our Lord every day into our hearts. Who so fit to enter the Holy of holies daily, to approach the Saint of saints, as His Mother? If in the Sacrament of the Altar, grace sheds itself upon the soul in proportion to its degree of preparedness—its capacity to receive It, impossible for us doubtless it is, fully to understand the measure of grace produced by the Eucharistic Visit of Jesus to His Mother. She has been rightly styled a spiritual Vessel of every virtue, ever filled to overflowing.—If we compare our Communions with Mary's, our preparation with hers, we shall see how indifferently made our preparation often is, and with what want of love and attentiveness we

entertain the Spouse of our souls, when He comes to be our Guest. Oh, that our hearts too were capable of receiving larger supplies of grace, that the effects of the Blessed Sacrament were more evident in us, that It permeated our lives and influenced our every action ! We should ask Mary to teach us how to approach the Sacred Banquet more fervently, more carefully ; so that we may gain from it abundant fruits of grace and of sanctification. May she protect each one from the misfortune of ever receiving the All-Holy One into a heart defiled by any grievous sin : though He entered therein, He could not stay.

COLLOQUY.

O Mary, my Mother and my example, may I ask thee to obtain for me holier sentiments, bearing at least a better resemblance to those, with which thou didst receive the Blessed Sacrament. This special request I make to thee to-day : so that in receiving the God of Love, I may have the happiness of obtaining in greater abundance those precious graces, which He sheds forth into well-prepared hearts.

RESOLUTION.

Carefully to prepare for Holy Communion.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

The Bread that I will give is my Flesh.

PRAYER.

O Jesus, living in Mary.

Saturday after the Festival of the Sacred Heart.

The Heart of Mary as the Tabernacle of the Divinity.

Thou hast found grace with God.—S. LUKE I.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent to ourselves Mary standing ready to receive us, her children ; and to bestow on us tokens of her motherly affection.

II. PRELUDE.

O holy and immaculate Heart of our divine Mother ! would that our hearts might love Jesus, and in Him, all mankind, as thou didst. Sweet Heart of Mary ! let us rest our thoughts and affections in thee.

I. POINT.

The Heart of Mary as the Tabernacle of the Divinity.

To understand, in any degree, the treasures of grace and of virtue which the Heart of the Mother of God possessed, we must ask our Lord to open before the eyes of our soul this pure Sanctuary, and to unveil to us the perfections enclosed therein : He only knows all the beauty and holiness of that virginal heart. Having chosen it to be the Tabernacle of the Divinity, He has adorned it with all the gifts of His love ; so that it has been formed into the true

image of His Own. How much, therefore, we should venerate the pure and lovely Heart of Mary; with what confidence should we appeal to its tender feelings in our regard! Such appeals cannot be in vain: she will help us to bring the thoughts and affections of our hearts into conformity to her own, which has been rendered so pure, so gracious, by Him Who fitted her to be His dwelling-place. If we apprehend the rigour of Divine judgment, let us take refuge in that Temple, which has ever remained inviolable. Through Mary we approach more nearly to Jesus, our Advocate with the Father: for she is His Mother, and we are her children.

II. POINT.

The Heart of Mary, as an Altar on which burns the fire of love.

We may consider the most holy Virgin as bearing within her Heart an Altar, on which burned incessantly the fire of love for the Incarnate Word; a golden Altar which owed its beauty and its brightness to the flames of divine charity which were ever enhancing them. It has been called the mystic Altar on which were offered all the sacrifices of the variously-appointed altars which God had ordained to be raised, under the direction of His servant Moses. From it went up continually the sweet incense of devotion: one, who was without blemish, offered the bread of the sanctuary—that Bread of Life that came down from Heaven. That mystic Altar is also the Altar-of-holocausts, since our Mother suffered a perpetual martyrdom. And we may present ourselves before the Heart of Mary, as before an Altar-of-expiation; and ask, by the merits of all she endured for us, that her Son

may be propitious towards us; and accept on our behalf the sacrifices offered within the Sanctuary of Mary's Heart. The Sacred Heart of our Lord teaches us how to honour the pure Heart of Mary; both that of the Mother and the Son beat together in perfect unison. O Blessed Virgin, obtain for us the grace we need, to imitate thee, as thou hast imitated Jesus Christ.

COLLOQUY.

O Mary! render me worthy of my vocation as thy child. To thee I consecrate my heart; and do thou communicate to it a better love of all those virtues which adorned thine own—and chiefly obedience, humility, purity, patience, and love. So may I become a faithful Spouse of thy Dear Son; and be wholly devoted to thee and to Him, until the hour arrive when I shall be admitted into His Presence, and find thee also, near His Throne. O day of joy!

RESOLUTION.

To turn to the immaculate Heart of Mary in my trials and difficulties.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Thou hast found grace with God, O Mary.

PRAYER.

O God, Who by the Immaculate Conception.

Fourth Saturday after Pentecost.

Mary's humility proposed as an example for us to imitate.

Behold the Handmaid of the Lord.—S. LUKE I.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us listen to the words of our Lady, as she replies to the message brought by God's Ambassador : *Behold the Handmaid of the Lord : be it done unto me according to thy word.*

I. POINT.

Mary's humility was united with real sanctity, and a clear knowledge of divine things.

The Jews were accustomed, in derision, to make use of this proverb : *Can anything of good come from Nazareth?* Yet all unknown to the world, a woman, blessed above all other women, a virgin most prudent and full of wisdom, dwelt there ; in that poor, mean town, in the country of the despised Galileans. The world passed Mary by : if a few recognised her virtues, none appreciated her powers of understanding. The fathers often make the wonderful intelligence of the Blessed Virgin their theme. She possessed a profound knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, and a clear understanding of God's precepts. And certainly, after the Incarnation, she must have comprehended heavenly mysteries in a manner more perfect than Adam in his deep sleep, Saint John when leaning on Jesus' Breast, or Saint Paul when rapt even to the third heaven, *for That which*

was conceived in her was of the Holy Ghost. Notwithstanding, she descended lower into the depths of humility than any other creature. The Angel Gabriel saluted her as a being superior to himself, and bowed with deep respect when in the presence of this saintly and blessed Virgin: it was the desire of Jesus that His Mother should be most humble, yet exalted to the very heights of perfection. By pride man had lost original grace: by humility Mary was to win back God's favour—through the second Eve the human race was to recover its former condition. It behoves us to take good care lest vain complacency in our talents, or the keeping up of the semblance of piety only, prove fatal to humility in us. According to Saint Ambrose, "humility is the throne of wisdom, the mantle of grace, and the prelude of glory". Mary, when on earth, was truly the impersonation of this virtue.

II. POINT.

The greatness of Mary did not lessen her lowliness.

The incomparable dignity of becoming the Mother of God, produced in Mary fresh acts of humility: the glory attached to her unparalleled position inspired her with no sentiments of pride. Saint Bernard thus alludes to this seeming impossibility: "What humility must that not have been to which the highest honour could do no injury, and which the most dazzling glory did but increase!" Gabriel proclaimed her to be the chosen Bride of Heaven, and she declared herself to be only the Handmaid of the Lord. In the midst of abjection, we look naturally for humility, but usually it is difficult to find in the midst of honours. The religious vocation is a vocation of humility; we have nothing to dread so much as its contrary vice: all the temptations

which arise to shake our fidelity to our vows would vanish, if pride were utterly rooted out of our hearts. Let us then recommend ourselves to Mary, and pray in the words which the Church teaches us : O God, Who lookest upon such as are lowly, and knowest what is truly great, deign to give to us, Thy servants, grace to practise with pure hearts the humility of Blessed Mary, ever Virgin, who pleased Thee by her chastity ; and because of her humility conceived Thy Divine Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

COLLOQUY.

O Mary, the most humble of all creatures, thou hast seen how my sins have manifested my want of gratitude towards God ; and nevertheless, instead of being humbled by this consideration, my heart and my imagination are too often filled with pride. Oh, come to my rescue ! and by the merits of thy humility, may I obtain grace to become like Jesus, *meek and humble of heart*. So faithfully didst thou correspond with God's grace, that thou wast deemed worthy to receive the highest honour He could bestow. *He regarded the humility of His Handmaid*. All praise be to Him for having chosen thee, O Virgin most humble, to be the Mother of the King of kings.

RESOLUTION.

To ask Mary to obtain for me greater humility.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

He hath regarded the humility of His Handmaid.

PRAYER.

We fly to thy patronage.

Fifth Saturday after Pentecost.

The great confidence we should have in Mary's assistance.

Jesus saith to His Mother : Woman, behold thy son. After that, He saith to John : Behold thy mother.—S. JOHN XX.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent to ourselves Mary at the foot of the Cross, accepting from Jesus a new charge,—that of being the Mother of all the children of His holy Church.

II. PRELUDE.

O Mary! we invoke thee as our Mother, ready to assist us in all our trials and afflictions: pray for us, who now have recourse to thee with filial love and confidence.

I. POINT.

They who are the Spouses of Jesus, can never doubt that Mary will help them.

The most holy Virgin looks upon all the Faithful as her children; adopted by her when she was standing by the Cross of Jesus. Especially then does she regard as such, those whose lives are entirely consecrated to His love and service. We know that amongst all creatures—amongst all God's Saints—none can be found who could love our Lord as did His own Mother. "To the natural love she had," says Saint Anselm, "for Him, as having been born of her,

was joined a supernatural ; a love not only infused, but also acquired, by means of the exercise of continual acts of charity :” thus she loved Jesus with a more perfect love than that, with which all the Saints together could ever love Him. How much affection, therefore, must she lavish on those whom her Son has called to a life of close union with Himself. They are one with Him, and their claim on Mary’s love, who can gainsay ? Certainly not His Mother ! Can she despise the prayers of such ? can she refuse the succour they ask ? No ! They ought to be well persuaded that she will be their especial protector, since they are spending their lives to promote the greater glory of her Well-Beloved Son.

II. POINT.

How laudable it is to forward the interests of Mary.

If we consider the Blessed Virgin as our Mother—if we strive to honour her—to procure an increasing devotion to her—in times of difficulty and of danger she will manifest her appreciation of our fidelity in her cause. And yet we may well say that all she does for us is done gratuitously ; and in fulfilment of her Son’s desire that she should act a Mother’s part towards us. We love to converse with others about her, to speak of her privileges, her greatness, her glory ; and yet all language is too weak to express her merits. But our attachment to her, if it be real, will urge us constantly to proclaim by our words and actions, that at least we do our utmost to please our Lord by revering Mary. The last words He spoke to her before His Death, should have for us a peculiar significance, and be continually bringing to our remembrance this truth : we are Mary’s children. Let us, as it were, lead her home into our

hearts : of Saint John it is said : *And from that hour that disciple took her to his own*, so impressed was he by the circumstances of time and place under which Jesus bequeathed to him (as our representative) the love and devotedness of His Mother's heart : it was His to dispose of. The very last words spoken directly to any one from the Cross were : *Behold thy Mother*. Well may they sound continually in our ears like a sweet refrain ; and be ever deepening our devotion both to Jesus and to Mary.

COLLOQUY.

Mary ! thou art my protector, my refuge ; to thee I turn in all my sorrows and tribulations : and as I do so, I see Jesus and His love more clearly, notwithstanding the clouds which may be hanging over me. Jesus and Mary ! they are never apart : where I find the holy Mother, there I find also her Adorable Son. As He thought and spoke of the sacred link formed between thee, O Mary, and myself, in His last moments, so may I cherish the remembrance of this ; while it increases my love and gratitude for all those blessed results of thy Maternity, which I cannot fail to recognise.

RESOLUTION.

Often to repeat to myself : *Jesus said : Behold thy Mother*.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Hail ! Mother most pure—hail ! Virgin renowned.

PRAYER.

We fly to thy patronage.

Sixth Saturday after Pentecost.

The Confidence we should have in Mary, since she who is our Mother, is the Queen of Heaven.

She is more beautiful than the sun, and above the order of the stars: being compared with the light, she is found before it.
—WISDOM VII.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent to ourselves Mary looking down from the height of Heaven, upon us her children.

II. PRELUDE.

O Mary, Mother of Mercy and Queen of Heaven! may we understand the happiness of belonging to thee, and that for ever; and prove our gratitude by our increase of devotion.

I. POINT.

The confidence we ought to have in Mary, since she is Queen of Heaven.

It is perfectly right and just, and most reasonable, that the Church should salute the Blessed Virgin as she does, at this season of Her year: *Hail! Holy Queen, Mother of Mercy*: and that she should desire that all Her children honour her, by the use of this glorious title. Mary has been raised to the dignity of Mother of the King of kings. "If the Son," says Saint Athanasius, "be the Eternal King,

what position can His Mother fill but that of Queen of Heaven and earth? At the moment Mary consented to the fulfilment of the Mystery of the Incarnation, she merited to become the Sovereign over every other creature, by reason of the choice God Himself made of her; and of her perfect obedience to His Will. And we, her subjects and her children, may think of her as a Queen full of goodness and of clemency; occupied only in relieving the necessities and miseries of her people. Our confidence in her may indeed be unbounded, for we know by experience, at least somewhat of her power with God; and the extent of her merciful condescension in making use of her royal prerogatives for our benefit. She speaks for us, and inclines her Son to regard with favour the petitions we present through her. Let us often picture to ourselves, as well as we are able, the regal court of the Heavenly King, and think of Mary's influence there.

II. POINT.

Mary has herself declared that she succours us.

We may safely say that there is no one in the world, who has not been an object of Mary's solicitude. She thus revealed this fact to the holy widow, Saint Bridget: "I am the Queen of Heaven and the Mother of Mercy: I am the cause of rejoicing to the just, and the gate by which sinners pass, to go to God. To none on earth do I refuse my pity; there is no one who has not obtained some grace through my intercession." At another time she said: "Should a mother see her child in the power of an enemy, would she not use all her endeavours to release him—to save him? It is thus that I act with regard to all my children, sinners

though they may be, if they have recourse to me." Our gratitude to God is great, if we have been blessed with a good, loving, and noble-hearted mother : what ought it not to be when we consider the spiritual relationship He has ordained should be formed, between the Mother of Jesus and ourselves. In Heaven—at this moment—there is the Perfect Man—Christ Jesus ; and there is the perfected Woman—Mary : He is God, the Creator : and she, the Immaculate Virgin, the creature preordained from all eternity to be the link, by which Heaven and earth should be united. Shall we not adore and magnify God all the more, on Mary's account ? Our hearts expand with love for Him, as they admit Mary's love more perfectly : and under its influence our gratitude towards God increases, for all He has done for us, through her.

COLLOQUY.

Mother of my God, and my Queen ! I present myself before thee, and beg thee to speak of me favourably to thy Adorable Son. Intercede for me, that I may obtain the graces of which I stand most in need, especially the virtue of Remind me more often of the wonders God has wrought by thy instrumentality : and of the honours which He reserved for thee, and thee alone, from all eternity. I think of thy royal dignity and state, and long for the day when I shall join thy children, as they gather round thee ; and offer a tribute of love more worthy the acceptance of the Mother of the Great King.

RESOLUTION.

To think of our Mother now reigning in Heaven.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Behold your Mother.

PRAYER.

We fly to thy patronage.

First Saturday in July.

The Mystery of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin.

Mary went into the hill country : And she entered into the house of Zachary, and saluted Elizabeth.—S. LUKE I.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent to ourselves the Mother of the Saviour on her way to that city of Juda, where Zachary and Elizabeth dwelt.

II. PRELUDE.

Make us to understand, O Mary, the wonderful effects which the in-dwelling Presence of Jesus produces in the soul, so that we may strive to retain It : to this end may we act in compliance with thy counsels, and the teaching of thine own example.

I. POINT.

The in-dwelling Presence of Jesus, caused the Blessed Virgin to be replenished with ardent charity towards her neighbour.

Endowed with extraordinary graces, consequent on the Presence of Jesus, one of Mary's first desires was that the house of Zachary, and the child whose birth had been miraculously announced, should partake in her blessedness. For a little while the most sacred Mystery of the Incarnation held her absorbed in deepest contemplation ; and this spirit of recollection might well have kept her in retreat within her home : but true *charity seeketh not her own*, and intuitively Mary perceived that the hour had already come for sacrificing her inclination to remain alone with God. Understanding His loving purposes with regard to the human race, she rises in haste to carry out the desire with which Divine charity inspires her, of causing others to be sharers in the benediction of Jesus' Presence. She was henceforth to be a channel of grace to all mankind. And the first results of this design on the part of God, were to be visible in the family of the Precursor of His Son. He, being yet unborn, was thus freed from original sin ; and witnessed to the joy produced by his nearness to Him, Who dwelt in the chaste womb of the Blessed Virgin. Elizabeth herself was, from the same cause, filled with the Holy Spirit of God, Whose Will was so perfectly accomplished by His lowly Handmaid. Oh ! happy are they who are intimately united to Jesus ! Their very presence brings Him near to others, and inspires the love of all that is good and holy. And God delights to make use of such persons : they, even unconsciously, are constantly doing Him service, by causing

piety to make a favourable impression on the minds and hearts of those, with whom they come in contact. The thought of God is awakened by their words and actions : there is an ideal, yet veritable association, between their personal influence and the omnipresence of God.

II. POINT.

Jesus produced in Mary lively sentiments of the greatness of God, and consequently those also of deep humility.

Elizabeth, enlightened by the Holy Ghost, found no expression too exalted, whereby to extol the happiness and dignity of Mary. But we seem, says Saint Bernard, to hear this lowly Virgin replying thus, to her cousin's inspired words of welcome and congratulation : "You magnify me and proclaim my blessedness amongst women ; but as for me, I can but magnify God, to Whom alone belongs the glory of all the marvels He has accomplished in me and by me. You call me the Mother of our Lord, but I think myself too highly honoured to be spoken of as His Handmaid. It is true that *all generations shall call me blessed*, but even in this, all the glory must revert to God, whose goodness alone has caused Him to regard my lowliness." Such were the sentiments inspired by the Presence of Jesus, in the heart of the most highly privileged of all creatures. She saw God only, as the Source of all good—of every grace. Let us examine ourselves before Him, and see what effects our actual contact with Jesus produces in us, and on others. Have we a pure, disinterested love for our neighbour? Do we realise in ourselves a true sense of the greatness of God, and of our nothingness? Are we so absorbed in these

certainties, that we forget ourselves, and our own temporal interests? We should strive practically to believe the words of a pious writer : "Such a person is unknown who could be united to God, and not be full of zeal and divine charity".

COLLOQUY.

O Blessed Virgin, Mother of Holy Love, give me to share, at least in some degree, in thy humility and charity ; of which, in the mystery of the Visitation thou dost present to me so striking an example. Help me to sanctify the household whereof I form a part ; and to edify others by evincing the sincerity of my desire to take the last place. O Mary, like thee, I would accustom myself to say nothing, and do nothing which may detract from the glory of God, to Whom alone all glory is due. Thine own words shall be constantly on my lips : *My soul doth magnify the Lord : His mercy is from generation unto generation unto them that fear Him.*

RESOLUTION.

To avoid all self-seeking.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

My soul doth magnify the Lord.

PRAYER.

O Jesus, living in Mary.

DAYS OF RETREAT.

The Day of Retreat in June.

If we would be transformed into Jesus Christ, we must study the virtues of His Sacred Heart.

Take up My yoke upon you, and learn of Me, because I am meek, and humble of heart.—S. MATT. XI.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent the Sacred Heart as the Object on which the affections of all truly religious persons are concentrated.

II. PRELUDE.

Divine Heart of our Saviour, Source of all virtue, let us regard Thee as the Model of our hearts: we beg of the Holy Spirit to make them like unto Thee.

I. POINT.

By the piercing of the Heart of Jesus, He, with mystic meaning, invites us to look within It.

“Jesus has willed,” says Saint Bernard, “that His Side should be pierced upon the Cross, in order that we might, by this mysterious opening, behold the Sacred Heart; and sound, as far as we can, the depths of the immensity of His love for us.” Saint Augustine admires the aptness of this choice of words: *It was pierced*; “by which we understand that His Side was not struck nor wounded merely, but opened; and that we are invited to look within and contemplate that Centre of all virtues, which Jesus had already proposed to us as a model to be studied and imitated. *Learn of Me, for I am meek, and humble of heart.* This meekness and humility found expression in every action of the Son of Man, from the moment of His Incarnation, until His commendation of His Spirit into the hands of the Heavenly Father. And do humility and meekness not find expression still, in the lowly externals which surround the King of kings, within the Tabernacle?—and in His patient waiting there for our acts of recognition and of adoration? If we take the Life of our Lord on earth—visible for thirty-three years—invisible for nearly two thousand—what is it which calls forth our deepest reverence, our most attentive love and courtesy? Surely it is the beauty of divine humility—the charm of divine meekness, which win our hearts, as they have won the hearts of all true lovers of Jesus, in all ages; of all who have learned of Him, and studied to become like Him. We may pass from one scene to another in the Gospel narrative, and the Sacred Heart is ever unfolding to us the loveliness of Its virtues; but it is at the foot of the Cross that we are permitted to contemplate the marvellous completeness of Its perfections. There let us remain to-day, and obtain from It a renewal and increase of the graces It imparts.

II. POINT.

The blessed effects of contemplating the divine characteristics of the Sacred Heart.

We may apply to ourselves these words of the Apostle, as we consider the beautiful perfections of the Heart of the God-Man : *We all beholding the glory of the Lord are transformed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord.* We can see our Lord (Who is not now, as in the Old Testament, veiled beneath types and figures), as He really was, during the time of His appearance on earth; manifesting His glorious virtues. As we contemplate His marvellous excellencies, we seem to pass from one glory—from one perfection—to another; and this has necessarily its effect on us. We admire, we study, we desire to imitate; and almost unconsciously we become transformed into His likeness, *as by the Spirit of the Lord*; His own life evidencing itself in ours. We thus advance *from virtue to virtue, even in this vale of tears.* We acquire a humility, ever increasing in reality; a meekness, which becomes invariable: an obedience, more and more perfect; a charity, growing in ardour; and a zeal, better regulated and more active. And these blessed effects are brought about, not by our own ability in learning, not by the use of any natural talent, but because the reflection of the glorious virtues of the Sacred Heart is falling on our hearts, and is being imaged thereon by the action of the Holy Spirit. If *no man can say, "the Lord Jesus," but by the Holy Ghost*, how necessary must His assistance be, to enable us to attain a resemblance to the Son of God: it is the Blessed Spirit that effects in us this transformation. He gives us grace rightly to make use

of the privilege we possess, of looking into the very Sanctuary of every perfection ; of scanning its points of divine loveliness ; of entering within Its sacred portal, formed by the lance of suffering charity. Oh, hardness of the human heart ! To be untouched by this sublime expression of the desire of Jesus that His Sacred Heart should be seen and known of all men, bespeaks an indifference which may prove fatal. The cry of the Psalmist should be ever on our lips : *Take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.* May He imprint, deeper and deeper within us, the effects of the knowledge of Jesus, and of the excellence of His virtues ; that being freed from coldness and hardness of heart, we may become like unto Him—that *Christ be formed in us.*

COLLOQUY.

O Holy Spirit, enable me to learn daily some new lesson of sanctity, well ; as I study the virtues of the Sacred Heart under Thy direction. May I look with reverence and admiration within It, and understand what suffering Its love for me has caused It to undergo. Transform my heart ; mould it by Thy gracious influence, enlighten it by Thy illuminating power, until it bear the image of my Heavenly Spouse. Passing from virtue to virtue, by means of the practical consideration of His virtues, may I be abundantly *satisfied when His glory shall appear* unveiled, and I shall know Him, even as I am known of Him.

RESOLUTION.

To learn of Jesus more diligently.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

O Jesus ! make my heart like unto Thine.

PRAYER.

Soul of Christ.

The Day of Retreat in June.

CONSIDERATIONS.

The Holy Eucharist is the Food of the Strong.

He that eateth Me, the same also shall live by Me.—

S. JOHN VI.

I. POINT.

The Holy Eucharist has been called the Food of the Strong, not because the Son of God intends that all who partake of It should have already gained the mastery over their passions, and have proved themselves completely victorious over the temptations of the devil, the world, and the flesh, but because this Food is designed to afford us strength, and vigour, and courage for those very combats. It is intended to make us strong in the Lord, to endure every kind of persecution ; which, as Saint Paul tells us so distinctly, all must suffer *who will live godly in Christ Jesus*. And who, and where are our worst persecutors ? They are to be found within us ; and consist of our own evil pro-

pensities, which are in league with the open enemies of our salvation. Their deceits, their artifices, their importunity, their malice, their pertinacity, their harassing pursuit, tend to exhaust our forces and our patience. They would wear us out, did we contend with them unsustained by the Food of the Strong. The life of man upon earth is but a warfare: lest we faint in the actual strife, or by reason of the continual strain upon our powers of watching, the Lord *has prepared a Table before us, against them that afflict us.* And this Table is furnished with daily bread, to meet the daily demands upon our strength; and more than this—to sensibly augment it. In allusion to this unfailing Nourishment, Saint Augustine says, that by receiving It, “we are in God, and who is stronger than He? God is in us, and what is sweeter than Himself?” It is His power and His sweetness which attest His Presence in the Divine Eucharist; He, in It, is not despoiled of His essential characteristics.—He is therein our Strong, Living God—the All-Wise Prince of Peace. During the visible Life of Jesus on earth, He manifested His power: did He not cure the sick—exorcise evil spirits—still the rage of storm and tempest—and give back life to the dead? And all this before His triumph over Death and Hell: before man had been fully reconciled to God, by the shedding of the Precious Blood. Can our Lord—will He—show Himself less powerful to-day on behalf of His beloved children? No! by faith *we see Him Who is now Invisible*, daily performing miracles of grace in His Presence-chamber; where He gathers us together to feed us with the Bread of Life. May we not there truly recognise His almighty power? by It are not weak and ailing souls renewed? evil influences dispersed? spiritual life restored? Is not the troubled and agitated sea of human passion, as likely to call forth a manifestation of the Saviour’s might, as

the ruffled waves of the lake of Genesareth? since on that sea immortal souls are tossed, and may be ingulfed therein. Oh, life-giving, life-preserving, life-restoring power of Jesus, as displayed in the Divine Eucharist !

II. POINT.

It is due to the effects of the Blessed Sacrament, that the Church can rejoice over the holy lives of so many of Her members.

Jesus Christ, still living amongst us on our Altars, commands respect in so felt a manner, that many souls, for His Sake, withdraw from the world to spend their lives under the same roof with Himself—in His society. So impressed are they with the fact of His actual Presence on earth, that all else fades into insignificance ; and caring only to render themselves worthy to be constantly with Him, they forsake all other friends, impose upon themselves the vow of chastity, and are distinguishable by their regularity of life and reserved demeanour. The world observes these Religious ; and perceives, or at least might perceive, that they are constantly with Jesus ; it sees the effects of this holy companionship. These are they who take part with the Angels in forming the body-guard of our Lord, in His own Dwelling-place. Most deeply have they imbibed the spirit of the Psalmist, when he exclaimed : *How lovely are Thy Tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts : my heart and my flesh rejoice in the Living God : for better is one day in Thy courts, above thousands.* If we are of the number of those who are called to be in daily—hourly attendance, upon our God in His House, how high above all worldly interests should our sentiments rise : how sublime an idea should we entertain of our

vocation! As we consider its dignity, we may well say, in all humility: *For these things who is sufficient?* It is belief in the Sacramental Presence of Jesus that is our mainstay. Without It, Religious Orders could not exist. We know that the constant Companionship of our Beloved forms the greatest safeguard, the truest security to holiness of living. To be perpetually with the All-pure—All-loving—All-gracious Bridegroom of our souls, is a privilege which brings with it vast responsibilities which we do well to dwell upon, especially during this month. We have a mission to fulfil, an example of saintliness to give to the world. *You are the light of the world:* Jesus said to His Disciples. We have been placed by Him, Who has called us also, upon the candlestick of the Religious Life, *that our light may shine to all that are in the house of the Church.* Therefore our Lord adds, in speaking to all His chosen ones: *So let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father, Who is in Heaven.*

The Day of Retreat in July.

The Vow of Obedience.

In the head of the book it is written of Me, that I should do Thy Will: O my God, I have desired it, and Thy Law in the midst of My Heart.—PSALM XXXIX.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent to ourselves the edifying spectacle afforded

by that religious community, in which all its members are guided entirely by the spirit of obedience.

II. PRELUDE.

May we be filled, O God, with the spirit of Thy Adorable Son, Who made Himself to be a Model of obedience. Help us, who profess to practise it, to imitate Him in all our actions and intentions.

I. POINT.

The excellence of religious obedience.

By the vow of obedience, those who practise it in the religious state, make a sacrifice to God of that which is most dear to them. By the vow of poverty we forego the pleasure of possessing; by the vow of chastity we renounce the gratification of our senses; but by the vow of obedience, we immolate our own will, and sacrifice our liberty. What do we naturally love more than our will? On what set a higher value than on our liberty?—If we would be true Religious, we should love obedience in an especial manner, and strive continually to become more perfect in the observance of it. We should put no limit to the extent of our practice of this virtue; but submit, with great fidelity, our will and judgment to the will and judgment of our superiors, who have been chosen by God, as interpreters of His holy Will in all that concerns us. This is why Saint Francis Borgia says: We should refer all things to obedience, and trust ourselves unreservedly to its dictates. "Holy obedience is like a safe vessel, in which Religious may securely sail over the most stormy sea, to the port of a blessed eternity; by day and by night they are passing on un-

interruptedly, yes ! even while taking their repose." Within this vessel let us, having once embarked, remain : Providence is steering it, therefore let us not under any pretext whatever leave it, until we safely land on the eternal shores.

II. POINT.

The merit of obedience.

Religious, worthy of the name, gladly obey at all times with joy and promptitude ; submitting to what is commanded, however painful, humiliating, inconvenient, or opposed to their natural inclinations, that which is commanded may be. They readily go wherever obedience calls them, although this change of place, of employment, of companions, may involve a great sacrifice : such is the Will of God—they say—and the doing of that Will forms their true happiness. They obey blindly, not reasoning about the matter of the thing commanded, nor the experience of the person who has a right to command : it suffices that that particular person is God's representative, and they obey—cost what it may. They conform themselves to the prescriptions of their holy Rule with regard to place, time, and manner of acting ; without desiring the least alteration for their own peculiar satisfaction or accommodation. What a consolation at the close of life to be able to say with Jesus : *I have sought not my own will, but the Will of Him that sent me : I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do : I have been obedient unto death.* O happy life, O happy death, of one who can thus speak—of one who, living or dying, is the victim of obedience ! We have offered to God our will, it belongs to Him ; we cannot take it back without incurring great risk. Jesus has spoken to us—has said : *Follow Me.* If we say

to Him : Lord ! but let me do this or that to gratify my own will ! let me first satisfy some wish of mine, and then I will fulfil Thy Will, as expressed to me by my superiors—may we not expect to hear Him reply : *No man putting his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God.* We shall do well often to examine ourselves as to our fidelity to the vow of obedience, in making which we professed to give our whole being into God's hands ; that henceforward no waywardness on our part might frustrate His designs in our regard. Are we fully convinced that in obedience there is security ? Are we as thankful as we ought to be, when we remember that God has deigned to accept the offering of our will, our liberty, our judgment ; and to give in return His perfect Will for us to fulfil, His unerring judgment for us to follow, and the enjoyment of the true liberty of His children ?

COLLOQUY.

How greatly indebted am I to Thee, O Jesus, for having called me to a life which obliges me to the practice of continual obedience. Inspire me with the same sentiments of respect and love of submission, Thou didst Thyself manifest when dwelling with Mary and Joseph, in the little house at Nazareth. When tempted to follow my own will and inclination, let those words come back to my mind : *He was subject to them.* Oh, those thirty years of most perfect obedience ! May the very thought of them renew in me the spirit of self-abnegation, that my own will may be wholly lost in God's Will, my own inclinations completely merged in His divine purposes. Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, let me be one of your household !

RESOLUTION.

With regard to the interior spirit, and exterior duties of my rule of life, to practise obedience.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

I came down from Heaven not to do My own will.

PRAYER

Take, O Lord, and receive.

The Day of Retreat in July.

CONSIDERATIONS.

The obligations under which religious persons lie, of renewing in themselves the spirit of their vocation.

Neglect not the grace which is in thee.—1 S. TIM. IV.

I. POINT.

The need there is of renewing the grace of a religious vocation.

The zeal of the Church, and her tender solicitude for the higher sanctification of those especially, who make profession of Religion, is a sufficient proof of the necessity of keeping up the true spirit of our holy estate. It is for the carrying

out of this end, that She has Her institutions to aid in the development of sanctity of life : and to assist those, whom God has called to follow His Son more closely along the way of perfection, in the acquirement of the highest virtue ; by giving them frequent opportunities of reanimating themselves in the grace of their holy vocation. We know but too well, that unless we take some means to repair our daily spiritual losses, we imperceptibly, but surely fall into a condition, whence it is very difficult to rise again. We find that we have unawares, been gliding back into a state of slothfulness and tepidity. And how many, alas ! have fallen farther still : for our weakness is so great, our inclinations towards evil are so deeply rooted, that the downward course is naturally very easy, and the upward very difficult. New beginnings—fresh starts—renewal of spiritual strength—seasons of retreat—these are absolutely necessary if we would advance. The tendency to retrograde arises from the fact that we have originally been drawn out of nothingness : left to ourselves we should sink again towards that condition ; our bodies, formed of the dust of the ground, weigh the spirit down to earth, whither all things tend unless supported and renewed by the Divine Power. It is for us to prevent the effects of this natural tendency, by appealing to this same Divine Power, that it may uphold our steps in the way of perfection—if we fall that it may lift us up. *If our soul be humbled down to the dust, may we not still invoke it? Arise, O Lord, help us, and redeem us for thy Name's Sake.* In our self-examination, in our preparation for Holy Communion, in Retreat especially, we find out exactly where we are : whether we are progressing or retrograding. A watch requires winding up, and regulating from time to time, and so do we. There must be an adjustment of all that goes to make up our spiritual life. In how many places does Saint

Paul refer to this subject, throughout his Epistles : *Be renewed in the spirit of your mind : walk in newness of life ; let us go on to things more perfect.* The more we meditate—the more we are occupied with the things of God—the oftener will our strength be renovated, the faster shall we be tending towards the heights of perfection ; so shall we leave behind the weakening influences of the world and of corrupt nature, which are prejudicial to life. But by forgetfulness of God, holiest memories vanish,—the understanding loses a true apprehension and clear knowledge of Him,—and our goodwill grows less, through a certain want of circumspection, which want induces indifference and negligence. *If a just man shall fall seven times, he shall rise again :* but what need there is for us, who are so imperfect, to beware lest we fall oftener still, and recover not the false steps we may have made ; the consequence of which imprudence might be, that *we fall down into evil, and have no hope of things to come.* We are not exempt from all this danger in the Religious Life ; let not our peculiar advantages make us suppose that we can, even for a day, without peril, *neglect the grace that is in us*—its renewal—its augmentation.

II. POINT.

Principal causes of spiritual retrogression.

If we desire to persevere in the spirit and grace of our vocation, if we will continue the good we have begun, there are weighty reasons for the necessity of renewing the grace that is in us. Notwithstanding our firm resolutions to do better, we still commit many faults ; then what would it be if we were negligent on this point ? Besides our *household*

foes, (which are so capable of weakening our good desires) there are many others that seek to withdraw us from the service of God. The intercourse that we have necessarily with the world, exposes us to many perils ; its seductions try our constancy ; many bad examples are brought under our notice. Again : there is the wearisomeness of doing violence continually to nature, and we are so apt to relax our efforts. And then the devil, having such an implacable hatred towards all the servants of God, and above all towards the Spouses of Jesus, ceases not to attack them, if by any means he may pervert them and bring about their ruin : he spreads his snares to avenge the losses they are occasioning him. Our very employments have their dangers, against which we must beware, if we would persevere in grace, live according to the spirit of our vocation, and save our souls. But what can guarantee us from suffering loss, in the midst of these manifold perils, if we do not take time to consider our position, to examine our liabilities ? The causes of our frequent defection are evident : the intercourse we have with the world,—nature, with her thousand subtleties,—and the hatred of our arch-enemy, who is ever seeking to make us lose, rather than gain, a degree in sanctity. We cannot afford to be remiss in our duties of watching and praying, by which combined means we should be renewed day by day. The injunction laid down by Saint Paul, applies equally to those who have advanced far on the way of perfection, as to those who have made only a few steps : *neglect not the grace that is in you*. Let us deeply meditate on these words, and put them into practice ; remembering that our Lord said, *to whom much has been committed, of them more will be demanded*. It has been observed that God generally abandons the souls He has most highly favoured, if they subsequently become neglectful

about making use of the means of perfection with which He has provided them. Out of pure gratitude they, whom He has called into holy Religion, should serve Him with the fervour of the Seraphim; otherwise would it not be just that God should deprive them of those choice gifts that He has bestowed on them? And should He do so, they would most probably fall into a state of tepidity; and thence the descent into grievous sin and eternal ruin is often lamentably easy and rapid. Let us watch and pray then—seek to be day by day renewed in grace—and ask constantly for the gift of final perseverance. Concerning all this we should not rest content with our own prayers, but obtain those of the Saints in Heaven, and their Queen.

